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The Mennonite

www.TheMennonite.org
January 2, 2007

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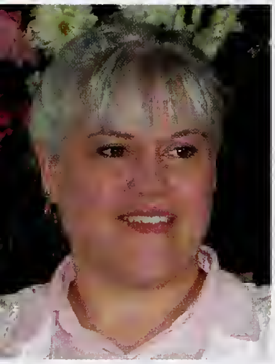
Unwanted gifts

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.—Romans 12:15 NIV



Donna Mast is co-pastor of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

Over the past several years, our congregation has experienced significant sorrow through changes in Mennonite publishing, changes in our church structures as two congregations became one and deaths affecting our church community. Most recently, the tragic death of a local high school boy affected many in our congregation, and one man—the boy's coach—in particular. We received an email from a person who had visited our church the Sunday after this tragic death. The person wrote: "I was surprised by the impact the Mennonite Publishing House decision had on your church community. … With all the pain you have experienced as a congregation, I wonder if your congregation has developed a gift of grieving. I was impressed with your capacity to grieve with your congregation as they faced the death of a community member."

I caught my breath and reread the note. Yes, the writer had said "gift of grieving." Those were not the words I would have chosen to describe the pain of the last several years. If gift it was, then it was certainly an unwanted, unwelcome gift. What does one do with an unwanted gift?

Actually it wasn't the experience of pain that was the gift. But the gift of grieving can only be received through an experience of pain. The ability to grieve truly is a gift, for if a person is unable to grieve their losses, other emotional responses can also become repressed, including the ability to function as a loving person. Losses will come; they are a part of life. So grieving is a necessity.

But what does one do with an unwanted gift? A newspaper writer, anticipating receiving unwanted gifts this Christmas season, suggests the idea of "regifting"—giving the gift to someone who will truly appreciate the gift.

The emailer who named what he observed in our congregation as the "gift of grief" offers us a gift in itself. By renaming our reality as gift, we are freed to look at our situation in new ways. Are we "regifting" this gift of grief when we surround another in the midst of fresh grief with care, understanding and support? I hope so.

When joy comes bubbling up out of the depths of despair, it is a joy that bursts wineskins.

Another friend of mine is experiencing the grief of a parent whose child has made poor choices that will have life-changing consequences. She responded to my questions of concern by saying: "There is even more intensity in joy when it is willed out of sorrow. That is what I'm striving for … joy in the sorrow. It's just too deep and wonderful that way. Truly the deep conviction of our relationship with Jesus is fuller when sorrow blooms into his joy."

When joy comes bubbling up out of the depths of despair, it is a joy that bursts wineskins. The old container of joy cannot hold this new, unexplainable joy, for it is a different brew altogether. I hope the joy our congregation is beginning to discover is a brew of kindness and gentleness that brings healing to others who grieve. I hope it is a brew of love that reaches beyond ourselves.

This Christmas season, may the gifts you give be appropriate and well received. May you be gracious when you receive an unwanted gift. And when you experience loss, as we all do, may you be blessed with the gift of grieving.

The Mennonite

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We welcome your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. Publication is subject to space limitations. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. If a letter addresses a matter related to a Mennonite Church USA agency, we also reserve the right to invite that agency to respond to such a letter in the same issue. Send your letter to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Living on less

Thank you for the timely article by Susan Miller, "Simple Ways to Live on Less" (Dec. 5, 2006), with its many good ideas. I encourage your readers, however, to expand this live-on-less view of simplicity to include a live-in-community view.

We live in an anonymous, individualized culture. When I shop online, I am no longer supporting the local merchants in my neighborhood. When I bank exclusively online, I don't get to know my local teller and may even choose a larger, more electronically sophisticated bank over a small town bank. Buying local food is sometimes a little more expensive, but it more than pays for itself when I know that I am helping support local farmers. And storing local food for winter can be a great family or neighborhood activity.

Duane Elgin said, "The character of a whole society is the cumulative result of countless small actions, day in and day out, of millions of persons."

With every daily decision, we create the world we live in.—*Mary Sue Gmeiner, New Carlisle, Ohio*

Thanks to Susan Miller for some suggestions for frugality in spending. Shame on the editors for the title of the article, "Here are some simple ways to live more simply." Living simply, living with less and living on less are not equals.

Since simple living is learning to live with less dependence on things, it is not the same for everyone (I need a sewing machine and my husband needs a computer). Living on less is more easily done some places than others. People may share more in a small community, but maybe more good stuff is thrown away in a city. Living with less will mean different things to different people. One common example is vegetarianism. Here are a dozen ways in which people in our congregation are living with less:

- bicycling to work or working at home;
- buying homes that don't require 30-year mortgages;
- buying used vehicles and driving them until the kids finish college;
- home schooling;
- living within walking distance of church, school or jobs;
- making things themselves instead of buying name brands;
- organic gardening;
- reclaiming trash (AKA Dumpster® diving) for groceries, clothing and most household items;
- recycling at home and in the neighborhood;
- sharing homes, vehicles, tools and expertise with others;
- using libraries instead of buying books;
- using mobile phones to coordinate travel instead of driving.—*Carol Bucher Bixler, Indianapolis*

Selling the Provident Bookstores

I am aware that the decision of Mennonite Publishing Network to sell the Provident Bookstores is permanent. By the time this is published the transaction has probably been completed. As one of the earlier directors of the Provident Bookstores, I would like to review some of the history of the stores with the hope that there will be some vision-minded people who will feel called to enter the bookstore business, creating independent stores where Anabaptist literature will be available in the marketplace—and with clerks who believe there is a mission to publish the Anabaptist good news through bookstores.

From John A. Hostetler's book *God Uses Ink* we learn that most of the Provident Bookstores were first owned by Mennonites and operated as independent Mennonite stores. Later they were purchased and operated by Mennonite Publishing House and traded as Provident Bookstores.

When I was at Goshen (Ind.) College, I remember H.S. Bender and J.C. Wenger speaking about how important publishing was and how grateful they were that we had our own publishing facility and bookstores. Their enthusiasm for this work was coupled to the revival they were observing in our church for radical Anabaptism. When the call came to me from MPH to be a bookstore manager, their teaching bore fruit.

Did something go wrong in maintaining the vision they had? Is there a chance for renewed

IN THIS ISSUE

The war in Iraq will undoubtedly be the main news in the United States for much of 2007, so this issue carries three articles about how Mennonites can think about pacifism in our national context. Jim Halteman (page 8) contrasts two routes to pacifism: One path considers pacifism a dominant gene and "a serious option for everyone to follow, whether Christian or not," while the second route is "so radical that most people will see it as foolishness." Keith Graber Miller (page 12) offers practical advice about how to be "creatively Christian and creatively American, drawing on the best from both traditions." Levi Miller (page 14) criticizes "unitary pacifism" and says that "a current version is to equate democratic America with a Muslim theocracy." By contrast, he says, "two-kingdom pacifists have more political savvy in understanding how democratic government actually works." The news section includes a listing of what our editorial staff consider the top 10 news stories of 2006.—*Editor* vision? I personally feel that Mennonite Church USA has lost an excellent nurture and evangelistic program.

I am also saddened to realize that the church was not willing to spend the money to maintain this valuable program. We do have money. We are spending it, but why are bookstores no longer a priority?—*Mark Moyer, Davidsville, Pa.*

Mennonite Publishing Network replies

Mark Moyer (above) highlights the importance of publishing Anabaptist materials and making them available to as broad a readership as possible. Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) is committed to that vision. However, we believe in today's environment that is possible without owning and operating bookstores.

Provident Bookstores provided a valuable presence and witness in a number of communities. In order for the stores to be economically viable they had to develop a broadly based Christian identity, with Anabaptist titles representing only a small part of their total merchandise offering. Further, in an increasingly challenging retail environment, MPN does not have sufficient resources to adequately invest in the stores and keep them viable.

Faced with these realities, the MPN board, in consultation with Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA leadership, decided to sell the stores to a bookstore chain that could provide continuing expertise and resources. The sale enables us to focus on our core mission of publishing Anabaptist-Mennonite materials and distributing these through as many channels as possible: direct sales to churches, through hundreds of bookstores across the country and, increasingly, through the Internet.

Additionally, the sale of the bookstores will enable MPN to repay the long-term debt arising from the financial crisis of five years ago significantly ahead of schedule.—*Ron Rempel, executive director, Mennonite Publishing Network*

Human life less valued?

Page 16 of the Dec. 5, 2006, issue has a quote across the top of the page that says, "The early church ... took a strong pro-life position. ..."

What actual evidence is there for this? The article states that "abortion and infanticide were commonly practiced by the Romans." There is also archaeological and historical evidence that it was practiced among the Jewish and the Greek societies of Jesus' day. Yet, strangely, Jesus and the disciples did not find it important enough to even mention in the Bible or anywhere else in the historical record.

How did the early church take a "strong pro-life position"? Did it criminalize the practice in some way by punishing the perpetrators, or did it merely put the onus upon the individual's conscience? If the latter, then I would argue that the early church was actually pro-choice.

I am uncomfortable playing God and imposing a criminal judgment upon a potential mother for her choices regarding what is in her internal organs. I have enough trouble keeping up with the moral lessons Jesus was crystal clear about, like loving my enemies.—*Jonathan Andreas, North Newton, Kan.*

Not in bomb shelters

I was pleased to read Anna Groff's recent editorial in which she affirmed that young adults want to remain connected to the Mennonite church ("Young Adults and Bomb Shelters," Dec. 5, 2006). Anna's comment about her home congregation, East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., and the active and energetic young adult group is a helpful illustration of the young adult connection about which the editorial speaks. The young adult Sunday school class continues to be a bright light in the congregation, and that light is not in a bomb shelter. It is shining across the generations, including to old geezers like me.
—*Glen Roth, Lancaster, Pa.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

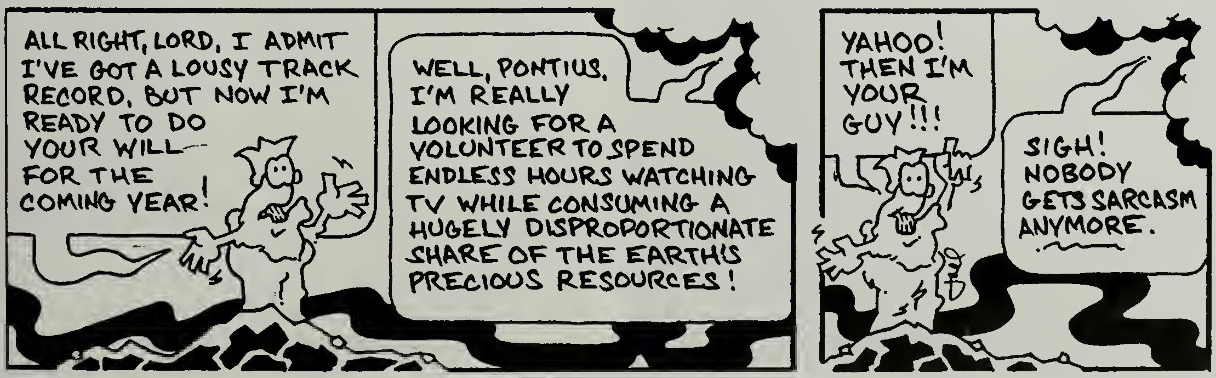
I believe

(58 votes):

○ Mennonites are called to be pacifists and to try to influence society to be pacifist (69%)
○ Mennonites are called to be pacifists but not to try to influence society to be pacifist (21%)
○ Mennonites are not necessarily called to be pacifists (10%)
○ Not sure (0%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


ALL RIGHT, LORD, I ADMIT I'VE GOT A LOUSY TRACK RECORD, BUT NOW I'M READY TO DO YOUR WILL— FOR THE COMING YEAR!
WELL, PONTIUS, I'M REALLY LOOKING FOR A VOLUNTEER TO SPEND ENDLESS HOURS WATCHING TV WHILE CONSUMING A HUGELY DISPROPORTIONATE SHARE OF THE EARTH'S PRECIOUS RESOURCES!
YAHOO! THEN I'M YOUR GUY!!!
SIGH! NOBODY GETS SARCASM ANYMORE.

IN BRIEF

Peace center receives grant

The Anabaptist Peace Center—Washington, DC, has received one of the first grants awarded by the Fransen Family Foundation. The grant will be used to help fund a conference tentatively scheduled for the winter of 2007-2008. The conference will explore how a politically divided church can be healed and come together to further Christ's message of peace and justice. More information can be found at apcwdc.mennonite.net.—*Keith Swartzendruber*

Chapel Hill pastor at Bluffton

Bluffton (Ohio) University welcomed minister-in-residence guest pastor Isaac Villegas to campus Nov. 28-30, 2006. Villegas is a pastor at Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship, Durham, N.C., a member of Virginia Mennonite Conference. Villegas posed to students the question, "At what point does our celebration of the coming of Christ become delusional?" He urged students not to use their spirituality "retreat from the world collapsing around us." People must not become so consumed by their faith that they are distracted from world issues. "Prayer is about watching," said Villegas. "It is about paying close attention to your surroundings."
—*Bluffton University*

CPT captives forgive their captors

UNITED KINGDOM—Norman Kember, James Loney of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and Harmeet Singh Sooden held a press conference Dec. 8, 2006, in London.

As members of a CPT delegation to Iraq, they were kidnapped on Nov. 26, 2005, and held for 118 days before being freed by British and American forces on March 23, 2006. Their friend and colleague, Tom Fox, a U.S. citizen and full-time member of the CPT team working in Baghdad at the time, was kidnapped with them and murdered on March 9, 2006.

The three said: "We understand a number of men alleged to be our captors have been apprehended, charged with kidnapping and are facing trial in the Central Criminal Court of Iraq. We have been asked by the police in our respective countries to testify in the trial. After much reflection upon our traditions, both Sikh and Christian, we ... unconditionally forgive our captors for abducting and holding us. We have no desire to punish them. Punishment can never restore what was taken from us.

"What our captors did was wrong. They caused us, our families and our friends great suffering. Yet we bear no malice toward them and have no wish for retribution. Should those who have been charged with holding us hostage be brought to trial and convicted, we ask that they be granted all possible leniency. We categorically lay aside any rights we may have over them.

"In our view, the catastrophic levels of violence and the lack of effective protection of human rights in Iraq is inextricably linked to the U.S.-led invasion and occupation. As for many others, the actions of our kidnappers were part of a cycle of violence they themselves experienced. While this in no way justifies what the men charged with our kidnapping are alleged to have done, we feel this must be considered in any potential judgment."

Noting that forgiveness is an essential part of Sikh, Christian and Muslim teaching, they said: "Through the power of forgiveness, it is our hope that good deeds will come from the lives of our captors, and that we will all learn to reject the use of violence. We believe those who use violence against others are themselves harmed by the use of violence."—*CPT*

Jim Bishop

An Italian bus ride

A group of 23 Eastern Mennonite University students who spent the fall semester in a cross-cultural study tour in Switzerland and Italy reflected on their life-changing experiences in the last chapel service of the fall semester Dec. 13. During their presentation, one group contrasted travel by bus in Switzerland with riding public transportation in Italy.—*EMU*

Gladys Widmer a persistent witness

GOSHEN, Ind.—Even at age 90, Gladys Widmer was a witness for Jesus wherever she went. "She was persistent, she never gave up. Even at 90 years old she ministered intensively to anyone," says Julia Naula, who attends Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor in Goshen, Ind., where Widmer spent her final years. Widmer passed away at her Goshen home Dec. 3, 2006.

Widmer served 30 years in Puerto Rico and planted churches in Iowa, New York City and Florida.

She was born in Noble, Iowa, in 1915. After her 1942 graduation from Goshen College, Widmer taught school, and then worked for five years as an office assistant at Mennonite Board of Missions (a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network).

All along, though, she knew her true calling was to be a missionary. She was appointed to serve in Puerto Rico in 1951. Though she had been sent as a teacher, she began numerous congregations there.

For her work in North America, she received the Lark Award for church planting in 1995.
—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Asian Mennonite leader studies at AMBS

ELKHART, Ind.—Yoshihira Inamine, chairman of the Asian Mennonite Conference, spent a two-month sabbatical, September to November, at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, funded by the AMBS's Engaging Pastors program.

Inamine has a particular interest in nonresistance and the way Mennonites understand Jesus' teaching about peace. In his theological studies in Japan, he focused on these issues, even when the topic was not well accepted by instructors there.

Courtesy photo

hristopher Dock dedicates new facilities

hristopher Dock Mennonite High School's second annual Fall
estival Weekend Oct. 20-22, 2006, included a dedication serv-
ce for the school's new facilities, a 44,000-square-foot aca-
emic center. This marked the end of a $12 million building
roject that also included the construction of a new Art
enter, a caretaker's cottage with guest suite and a mainte-
ance building. The new classroom buildings include a ceram-
s lab, art studio, graphics design lab, library, five science
lassrooms, family and consumer science classrooms, three
omputer labs, a campus prayer room and a Dock archives
oom.—*Christopher Dock Mennonite High School*

He came to AMBS as a student in 1976; now he returned with continuing questions arising out of his ministry. How can Christians promote the nonviolent shalom of Jesus Christ in the current world setting? How do you explain a loving God in the aftermath of a tsunami? Inamine met with AMBS professors and gathered resources for further study after he returns home.

Inamine is pastor of Minuma Mennonite Christian Church in Japan. As chairman of the Asian Mennonite Conference, he helps coordinate its goals: fellowship of Anabaptist churches in the region, facilitating mission work and promoting Anabaptist history and theology.—*AMBS*

Roma Eicher's 'spirit of prayer' will be missed

Roma Eicher

ALBANY, Ore.—Whether sitting with fingers curled over the ivory keys of her piano, head bowed in prayer or serving her church and community, Roma Eicher gave all she had with passion.

She took great joy in her family and many members were able to surround her with prayer as she passed away in the early morning on Dec. 9.

Eicher was a member of Lebanon (Ore.) Mennonite Church and served on numerous boards, including the former Mennonite Church and as chair of her conference's annual planning committee. In 2005 she was appointed to the Mennonite Mission Network board.

"We celebrate the life and contribution of Roma and will miss her compassion, care and the spirit of prayer she brought to her role with the Mission Network and in all her life," says Stanley Green, executive director of Mennonite Mission Network.

Eicher was born Nov. 21, 1942, in Harper, Kan. She and husband, Sam, were married on June 14, 1963. Together they have five children—Marisa, Dani, Jaqui, Tyson and Travis—and three grandchildren.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Small church sends two into missions

CORNING, N.Y.—Harold Miller, pastor of Community Mennonite Fellowship (CMF) in Corning, was pleased to see two young adults from the church volunteering to serve through Eastern Mennonite Missions.

In September, after both volunteers had left for pre-field training, Miller wrote to Stacy Nofziger, department manager for Discipleship Ministries at EMM: "We were in the middle of trying to raise money to send Amanda Tarntino as a mission intern to Wales and Kevin Gallagher in Youth Evangelism Service to Guinea-Bissau. One of them would be a lot for our small church (around 60 regular attenders) to send, yet we were trying to send two. We were at 50 percent of their support and unsure how to get much higher. Somehow the Lord pulled it off. We are now at 90 percent."

CMF grew out of Mennonite Disaster Service work in the aftermath of flooding and destruction precipitated by Hurricane Agnes in 1972. In 1974 the emerging church chose its first pastor and held its first baptism.—*EMM*

ADNet to begin 'Build a Haystack' campaign

GOSHEN, Ind.—Starting with the holiday season of 2006-07, the Anabaptist Disabilities Network will begin a "Build a Haystack" fund campaign, which will extend to its upcoming fiscal year through January 2008. Milt Stoltzfus, ADNet board treasurer, called the goal "working to build a haystack of resources and supports at which families and churches across the United States can feed."

ADNet hopes to raise $90,000 during the 15-month campaign, $30,000 in each of three time periods. The money is intended to balance the budget for the current fiscal year and provide a cushion for the operating fund during leaner months in the summer and fall. The Board also hopes to be able to add staffing time in 2007 and purchase resources.—*ADNet*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

'Illegal' world

About 1 billion people live in slums. According to a United Nations document, "The urban poor are trapped in an informal and 'illegal' world—in slums that are reflected on maps, where waste is not collected, where taxes are not paid and where public services are not provided. Officially, they do not exist." In the next 20 years the number of slum dwellers is expected to double. The Millennium Development goals are projected to improve the lives of only 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. *—The New Yorker,* quoted in *The Christian Century*

Christians in India attacked in 2006

Christians in India suffered at least 200 attacks in 2006 through November, the Global Council of Indian Christians said Dec. 2, 2006. The council said most victims have been "dalit," or people of low-caste descent, and members of tribal communities. The council blamed Hindu fundamentalist groups for most of the violence perpetrated, but also identified Muslim fundamentalists as behind some of the violence.—*National Catholic Reporter*

Nonviolence has the best chance of creating and maintaining peace because it is the right way designed by God for creation.

2 routes to a

pacifist position

Pacifism as dominant gene or radical calling

by James Halteman

During the Vietnam War I was a conscientious objector doing alternative service in a public welfare agency. It was easy to be a pacifist then. Most people seemed to understand why one opposed the war, and many wanted to take the CO route, whether they were religious or not. But things have changed, and the pacifist position is far from popular now in most circles.

I teach in a mainstream evangelical college where my colleagues are committed Christians and where an ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corp) program trains some students for a career in the military. People here are reflective about issues of faith and theologically astute. Open debate is encouraged on issues such as pacifism vs. a just war position. Simple answers or quotes from selected Scriptures will not work as arguments for pacifism unless they are integrated with a coherent theological position. But what theological position should a pacifist take?

There are at least two alternatives one might use, but only one that seems persuasive. These positions represent worldviews that apply to many social situations and provide frameworks around which our behavior in the social arena can be ordered. The first position I call pacifism as the dominant gene. The second position I call pacifism as a radical calling.

The first view promotes pacifism as a serious option for everyone to follow, whether Christian or not, because it works over time. Live peacefully, treat everyone fairly and with respect, if they are hateful, love them, and eventually they will soften their hostility. There may be suffering, and you may be persecuted, reviled or worse in the process, but this method has the best chance of creating a viable peaceful environment. This is not only applicable to individuals but to communities, nations and international alliances. Nonviolence has the best chance of creating and maintaining peace because it is the right way designed by God for creation.

Christians with this view seek to eliminate all instruments of violence and call for unilateral disarmament, if worldwide disarmament does not happen. A modified version of this view recognizes that some armed emergency force may be necessary to divert irrational behavior, but any national or foreign policy strategy relying on violent means should be rejected as inconsistent with the way the world can function if it gives nonviolence a try. At the core this message is one of transformation of the social order into peaceful coexistence at worst and peaceful harmony at best. For the dominant gene worldview, no matter what happens, nonviolence is better than all alternatives, thus the kingdoms of this world should be called on to live out the values of the kingdom of God.

The radical calling view is considerably different in emphasis and sees Christ's way of peace as so radical that most people will see it as foolishness. Anabaptists were among the first to recognize that true faith could not survive long when intertwined with national politics. Throughout much of history, when religious fervor and political power merged, the result was either a secularization of the church or oppression and holy wars. The way of the cross and the ways of the world do not blend easily. For this reason the radical calling view is doubtful that any national policy based on the radical pacifist teachings of Jesus will be successful in providing security for the people. One can point to many cases where loving one's enemy is the right public policy, but it is the hard cases that cause those who believe the radical calling view to pause when advocating disarmament for the government.

The first task of the Christian pacifist is to be faithful, modeling to the world the radical alternative way of life taught in Scripture.

In this view God's agenda for Christians in this world is twofold because there are really two kingdoms that are relevant in this world. The kingdom of God is what was intended at creation. It is this

Continued on page 10

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kingdom to which Jesus pointed in his teaching, and it is the values of this kingdom that believers are to point toward in everyday life. True, it is difficult to do in a fallen world, where human nature is bent toward violence, materialism and selfishness. Nevertheless, the goal is to be faithful, modeling to the world the radical alternative way of life taught in Scripture. This is the first task of the Christian pacifist.

The second task for the Christian with the radical calling view concerns the structures and institutions of the secular kingdoms of this world. In this view the believer is called to lean on these structures to persuade them to be the best that they can be given the fallen world in which they operate. In the area of international conflict, a just war position may be the best that can be expected. John Howard Yoder recognized in his interactions with Christian nonpacifists that constructive dialogue could result around the tenants of the traditional just war viewpoint. He pushed for a just war position with teeth, and in many situations that reduces to a pacifist position. For example, use of nuclear armaments is difficult for any serious just war proponent to accept. Only in the most difficult cases will the two positions diverge in practice. In those cases, people who hold the radical calling view simply recognize that they cannot participate in activities that the secular world may feel compelled to do. In these cases, the authorities still can be held to the standards of a just war, in hopes they can live up to the best they can be.

Peacemaking and the nonviolent way of the cross is an influence that every society desperately needs.

This practice is in keeping with the biblical injunctions calling for respect of authorities. Far from being aloof and separatist, the person with a radical calling view is engaged and has a prophetic voice in the social order. When the two agendas are pursued effectively the believer is providing salt and light in the world. As people calling the social order to the best that it can be, we permeate the culture for good as salt. As modelers of radical Christianity, we point toward the coming kingdom as a beacon in a troubled world.

In my experience with the evangelical mainstream that subscribes primarily to the just war position, only the radical calling view makes sense. Most nonpacifist Christians see the dominant gene view as naïve and out of touch with the downside of unredeemed human nature. At the same time, many do recognize that the secular world can do much better than it does. Most wars are not necessary and therefore are unjust. Most international conflicts could be resolved with holistic approaches to peacemaking, but not all injustices can be corrected peacefully in a world where some practice human nature at its worst. In these cases, people whose primary citizenship is in the secular order will do what Christians, whose primary citizenship is in God's order, cannot do.

There is no contradiction in this position, but some feel it is unfair for pacifists to become free riders benefiting from freedoms that others have died to preserve. On this point there is a clear response. Peacemaking and the nonviolent way of the cross is an influence that every society desperately needs. It shows people how an alternative model can enrich life and make it more secure for both the individual and the community. In many cases this vision is pursued at considerable cost and in some societies with considerable loss of life. The benefits of peaceful living are not excluded from anyone, whether pacifist or not. In short, the secular world free rides on the contributions of pacifists that often go unrecognized and unappreciated. The free-rider charge against pacifists fails to see the big picture of social costs and benefits and tends to overemphasize the notion that war is a necessary condition for freedom.

Finally, common cause between just war and pacifist Christians can best be made when mutual respect is part of the relationship. Thinking just war Christians are concerned about the dangers of American civil religion. They are not blind to the arrogance and recklessness of some national foreign policies, and they know that patriotism can go awry. They also respect a clearly articulated Anabaptist worldview, particularly the one I am calling the radical calling worldview.

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Oral tradition

by Julia Kasdorf

Before I leave, Percy Yoder means
to give me something I can use:

Your grandpa was a worker, a driver
We only saw him at market when

he had a cow to sell. But his dad—
I worked for him when I was young—

stopped plowing well before suppertime
so the horses cooled down and wouldn't gulp

back at the barn. Among fields
ancestors cleared long before tractors,

some lie bare to the sun. In others,
great oaks rain shade for horses and men.

Percy means to show me both
so that I may choose one.

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Faithfulness and of war

by Keith Graber Miller

The *Goshen News* headline smacked me like a punch in the gut: "Dissenting Voices Not Welcome in a Flag-Waving Chorus Across America."

It was just two weeks after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center Towers and the Pentagon, and retributive rhetoric still flew across the airwaves as the country sought to recover from its horrific trauma. Small pockets of U.S. citizens—some pacifists, some cautious just-war theorists, some veterans and military officers—raised their voices for a reasoned, moderate, multilateral response to the 9/11 violence.

Those voices, though, were a minority. We had entered a new world, a world of suspicion and terrorism, smart bombs and collateral damage, patriotism and freedom fries.

By now, with the muckiness of the war in Iraq, the calls for unswerving patriotism have lessened. But the post-Sept. 11 years have revealed significant differences among many U.S. Christians. Some have too fully imbibed and embraced American patriotism, too uncritically accepted the rhetoric of the (Christian) right. Others have too comfortably embraced the left.

We should respect and pray for our country's decision-makers, even while we challenge and critique their decisions, when necessary.

Divisions have been evident within congregations and across denominations, including among Mennonites, regarding appropriate Christian responses: Can we be faithful to Jesus, whom we call the Prince of Peace, hold our government accountable and still acknowledge gratitude for our country? Can we be both Christians and patriots? Because we are both citizens of this world and of the world to come, I believe God calls us to do just that.

Partly because of our pacifist past, Mennonites have not developed a nationalistic or patriotic spirit, in the ways these terms are understood in the United States. Mennonite ethicist J.R. Burkholder once responded to a critic by noting that what the critic had called "anti-Americanism" could better be described as "more-than-Americanism." At their best, said Burkholder, pacifists "consciously adopt a more global worldview than most Americans. They wear tribal identifications lightly and see themselves as global citizens."

The question of citizenship is essentially a question of competing loyalties, all of which may demand our wholehearted—and perhaps contradictory—allegiance. Pacifist Christians traditionally have viewed themselves as first and foremost disciples of Christ and citizens of God's reign, then citizens of the world and finally citizens of a given country. In contrast to that ordering, during times of warfare many Christians believe national citizenship should trump other loyalties. For pacifists this is not possible, especially if we are citizens of a powerful nation that is frequently at war.

But I want to look for ways to be creatively Christian and creatively American, drawing on the best from both traditions. Among the postures and practices that may allow conscientious, peaceable Christians to work at God's calling at this point in history are the following:

1. Maintain our humility as we talk with our neighbors and speak to national leaders. All of us must admit that we do not have quick or easy answers for responding to complex, 21st-century world conflicts. When we disagree with decisions our political leaders make, we must respond in a more gracious manner than our inclinations may take us. As good citizens of the United States who anticipate with hope God's reign, we should respect and pray for our country's decision-makers, even while we challenge and critique their decisions, when necessary.

2. Listen to those who believe differently from us. We need to seek out ways to share with those who don't agree with us and genuinely listen to their stories. We need to listen to Muslims, Jews and other Christians, to peacemakers and patriots, to people in our communities and country and to those in other parts of the world. Also we should at least commit ourselves to nonviolence in our personal lives, seeking to address conflicts with others in direct, honest and loving ways.

3. Recognize the dangers of the myth of redemptive violence. Redemptive violence is the belief that violence saves, that war makes peace and that

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Postures and practices for peaceable Christians

death brings life. Such a view is problematic in theory as well as practice. A month after the Sept. 11 attacks, Colonel Richard Dunn, former chief of the Army's internal think tank, said, "You can go and kill every one of their terrorists and hang bin Laden in front of the White House and you will not have solved the problem—and you probably have created hundreds of new terrorists." By fall 2004, the U.S. Defense Department acknowledged that Iraqi bitterness was a greater threat to the United States than the terrorism that purportedly prompted the United States to attack Iraq.

In a similar vein, a student in my Liberation Theologies class wrote: "War never brings peace—only uncertainty and fear for the civilians left behind when the soldiers go home. … We can say our military beat yours, but how many families will never be the same? How many children will be consumed by hate? What new enemy might spring forth from the rubble left in the wake of a passing army? Violence never brings about peace; it just brings more violence." The student's statement moved me, partly because she was not a pacifist but a 30-something Presbyterian—and a veteran of the first Gulf War. She continued: "I have many conflicting feelings about the role I played in the first Gulf War. On the one hand, I wanted to help save lives, yet in the process of doing so I was taking lives, taking freedoms and taking hope from those very people I so longed to help."

4. Challenge our nation to end its reliance on violence to solve problems and call for more international awareness and creativity. As one sage put it, "If your only tool is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail." Christian peacemakers hope the United States and other countries will work at the roots of terrorism—poverty, gross economic disparity, imperialism, exploitation, injustice—rather than react only militarily. Following the Apostle Paul's directive in Romans 12, we cannot destroy evil with evil but must seek to overcome it with good.

For decades the United States has been last among the industrialized nations in the percentage of its federal budget and Gross National Product we contribute for humanitarian aid to other countries. We give less than 1 percent of our budget and 0.1 percent of our GNP to foreign aid. What we give annually in total foreign aid would run the Iraq War for about three weeks. Overall, the Iraq and Afghanistan wars have cost the United States more than the sum needed to pay off the debts of every poor nation on earth. What if as a nation we became known for our humanitarian generosity rather than our militaristic reflexes?

5. Seek out the truth and hold our military, political and media leaders responsible for basic honesty and integrity. Americans often are in the dark about the extent of the casualties of our military actions. By now the number of Afghanis and Iraqis killed in the ongoing war is between 30 and 60 times the number of Americans killed in the Sept. 11 tragedy. At a minimum we need to believe some of the alternative and even mainstream news accounts about the stew of disinformation, deception and disrepute brewing among some of our senior political officials. As President Theodore Roosevelt said, "To announce that there must be no criticism of the President or that we are to stand by the President right or wrong is not only unpatriotic and servile but is morally treasonable to the American public." This isn't about being a Democrat or Republican, conservative or progressive, but about making independent moral judgments.

Following the Apostle Paul's directive in Romans 12, we cannot destroy evil with evil but must seek to overcome it with good.

6. Serve our brothers and sisters at home and around the world. For those unwilling to participate in warfare for conscientious reasons, we need to work to find contemporary moral equivalents to the sacrifices of war. We should encourage all those who believe in peace to participate in a one-year or multiyear service assignment, at home or overseas, through one of our many faithful church agencies or through other worthwhile humanitarian organizations around the world.

In short, pacifist Christians can be good U.S. citizens in a conflict-ridden time by being faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, impassioned peacemakers and hospitable friends to those we perceive as "the other." In a complex, 21st-century world, conscientious Christians can be good citizens by giving our first allegiance to Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. We can live our lives in ways that are faithful to the gospel. And we can share Christ's message of peace in a world often drawn to violence. Such a way of life is faithful to Jesus' teaching, and that may be sufficient. But it also is a way of being that—we can humbly hope—is as relevant in a violence-prone world as are alternative responses.

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The two-kingdom p

Two-kingdom pacifists know the difference betwee

by Levi Miller

This past summer at a Mennonite Central Committee relief sale I heard Peter Dyck tell the story of the 1947 Berlin Exodus. This is a story he has been asked to tell for more than 50 years. In religious terms it is a story of God's saving more than 1,000 Russian refugees from sure death, imprisonment or exile in their own land. The biblical overtones are fairly clear in what Barbara Smucker called *Henry's Red Sea* and Dyck calls the Mennonite Exodus.

In political terms it's a story of two Canadians representing more than 1,000 Russians to a gruff but good-hearted American lieutenant colonel, W.B. Stinson. A U.S. officer in divided Berlin encounters two noncitizens and 1,000 foreigners. In the story, the officer becomes "a good man, our friend and fond of the refugees." There is a Christmas program that Stinson attends, and Elfrieda Dyck says in her memoir *Up From the Rubble*: "I glanced at Stinson, a tall man and handsome in his uniform. He used no handkerchief, he just let the tears run down his cheeks."

Many times what two-kingdom people find so problematic about unitary pacifists, including some of their own church statements, is that they are so unpolitical.

Peter's listeners have theological and political space for the colonel and the refugees. Stinson is one of their true-hearted neighbors with whom American pacifists have lived for more than 300 years. In their two-kingdom political economy the officer represents one arm of the U.S. government, and the story reaffirms an Anabaptist belief. The protecting state has a positive role, whether it is the New Testament "sword," the Anabaptist "magistrates" or the 1995 Confession of Faith's government, which is "instituted by God for maintaining order."

Among many rank-and-file Mennonites, this political belief held surprisingly strong during the latter second half of the 20th century. These Mennonites trusted their stories even more than their storytellers. In their political theory, a Soviet and worldwide Communism that had killed at least 10 million people by midcentury and about 30,000 of their own denomination needed to be contained or defeated. They gave some credit to the democratic West, including the U.S. military umbrella, to provide protection for Christians to lead "quiet and peaceable lives," as the Bible says. They had family accounts of what Communism did to Christians in the Soviet empire, China and Cuba.

Many two-kingdom pacifists see Islamic fascist regimes today in a similar light to how an earlier generation viewed Communism. They give some credit to the Western democracies in trying to contain and perhaps even change them toward a freer democratic society (the Bush doctrine).

Two-kingdom pacifists got their politics from Jesus, who said his kingdom is not of this world, and hence his disciples do not fight (John 18:36). Jesus was willing to suffer and serve rather than take up the sword. Hence, two-kingdom Christians are great supporters of volunteer, civic associations, relief work, charity and giving what the Gospels call "the cup of cold water." They are often great supporters of missions and evangelism because this project is the main arena of God's activity, voluntarily inviting people to become Christians and members of the church.

When I was a youth in the 1960s, two-kingdom pacifism fell into some disfavor because the United States became embroiled in an unpopular war in Vietnam. The government and military were considered corrupt, even among just-war advocates. People compared our government to Nazi Germany, and a favorite quote was from the German pastor Martin Niemöller in 1945: "First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew." Next, they came for the Communists, the trade unionists and finally for me. The quote ends: "and there was no one left to speak out for me."

The message was clear. If our country is the equivalent of the greatest regime of evil in the 20th century, we must speak out, and many of us did, often joining the political left in the cause. Some Mennonites moved to a unitary pacifism and made cause with a blame-America-first political pacifism. Others took on a traditional Quaker pacifism, which assumes everyone will eventually follow a peaceful light.

But many two-kingdom pacifists simply didn't buy this political equation. To consider the U.S. government the moral equivalent of the Third Reich or later with the Soviet Union seemed pure nonsense. A current version is to equate democratic America with a Muslim theocracy.

Some candor is called for. Two-kingdom pacifists can be political and have been through most of the 20th century. Many times what two-kingdom people find so problematic about unitary pacifists, including some of their own church statements, is

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age and substance.

that they are so unpolitical. Politics is reduced to witness and persuasion, but two-kingdom pacifists recognize that to approximate justice and restrain evil in the world, politics involves power and governing.

Power and governing in democratic societies is not unrelated to persuasion and witnessing. And one of the true marks of two-kingdom politics is restraint, to speak with credibility. Being a virtuous Christian pacifist does not necessarily make you wise on all government policy. Last year, Peter Dula, a Mennonite relief worker in the Middle East, stood squarely in that tradition when he was asked about U.S. foreign policy. He said he did not know. Two-kingdom pacifists tend to avoid leftist political exhibitionism more reminiscent of Jane Fonda and Michael Moore than of Doris Janzen Longacre and Myron Augsburger.

When Mennonites and Brethren on a city council hire and arm police officers to maintain order, they are practicing two-kingdom politics. Even John Howard Yoder, who emphasized politics as witness, recognized some necessity for two-kingdom politics. In his classic *The Christian Witness to the State*, he proposed "middle axioms" as a way to bridge the church's higher ethic with the lower ethic of the state. Two-kingdom politics is a restrained politics, informed by Jesus but also by political realism.

Congressman Ralph Regula knows pretty well how Mennonites and their Amish cousins vote in eastern Ohio—as did Representative Bob Walker, who represented Pennsylvania's 16th District (Lancaster) for 20 years. These legislators know that the political instincts of these constituents is for freedom and justice for churches, families, citizens and businesses.

Western liberal democracies have generally recognized the value of two-kingdom pacifists in their provinces and states. Liberal states function best when their citizens embody civic virtues such as a vigorous work ethic, honest labor and business practices, healthy families and religious teaching. Several years ago, I was at a meeting in the Ukraine, where Mennonites were driven out during the Communist period. The Canadian ambassador thanked the Ukrainians for sending the Mennonites to Canada. He was not making light of the brutality the Mennonites had suffered during the Communist era. He was simply recognizing the cultural and political capital the Mennonites brought to Canadian society.

Two-kingdom pacifists are generally fairly savvy politically and have three centuries of tradition in North America. They have seen popular peace movements come and go, especially when based on pragmatism rather than biblical principles. And if two-kingdom politics can be realistic in international relations, it is no less so in domestic politics.

Last August, 90-year old Judson Schuler was honored by the Holmes County, Ohio, Bar Association. Schuler recalled that he had served as the county's prosecuting attorney for one term, from 1952 to 1956. During that term, Schuler represented the state in prosecuting the parent of an Amish youth who was repeating the eighth grade rather than going to high school.

Two-kingdom politics is a restrained politics, informed by Jesus but also by political realism.

Schuler said he did not understand the impact of the case until the 1956 general election. "I carried 21 of 28 precincts and every village but lost the election," he said. "In those seven precincts, you'd see 300 votes for my opponent and one or two for me." He recalled this political response, which came 15 years before the Supreme Court's Yoder vs.Wisconsin decision allowed the Amish to end formal schooling at grade eight.

Although this case may seem unusual, Mennonites, Brethren and Amish in other communities can tell similar stories of their political influence.

Both unitary and two-kingdom pacifists confess that politics is secondary to the gospel and the building of the church. Generally, however, two-kingdom pacifists have more political savvy in understanding how democratic government actually works. Whatever the value of noise and publicity in politics, most politicians do not mistake such activities for its totality. Politics is also a quiet influence through business and civic associations, winning elections and actually governing in a pluralistic culture. If two-kingdom pacifists often seem quiet, they are no less effective in politics. They know the difference between image and substance and they give some preference to the latter.

Levi Miller is director of Herald Press for Mennonite Publishing Network.

Who said Jesus d politics?

by Philip E. Friesen

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.—Matthew 28:18

Most people are happy to give Jesus full authority in heaven, but on earth it really doesn't seem practical. For them, Jesus was a great religious teacher but certainly had nothing to say about politics. Yet politics in Jesus' time were not much different from politics today, and if we are his followers, then his example should be our model. Here is the story of Jesus' confrontation with politics.

1. He claimed divine authority for his actions. All ancient emperors claimed divine authority. In fact, the ancient Chinese called their emperor the "Son of Heaven." Jesus was no exception. The gospel tells us that when he was baptized, a voice from heaven announced, "This is my Son, who pleases me." Any doubts that Jesus had about a divine call to govern would have evaporated at that moment, and the next step was for him to escape to the desert to meditate and hear from God about how to approach his task. As soon as he returned to Galilee, he announced the kingdom of heaven's imminent arrival.

No U.S. politician since George Washington has ever enjoyed the kind of public support Jesus had.

2. He recruited followers and mounted a campaign. Using his connections with a famous populist evangelist by the name of John the Baptizer, he was able to recruit a core of well-qualified students. Before long he led a diverse band of followers, ranging from the political extremes of Matthew the tax officer to Simon the Zealot. Matthew was a collaborator with the occupation forces of Rome, whereas Simon was connected to a violent, revolutionary party. No other ideological combination could have been more volatile, but Jesus' exceptional skill was seen in how he made it work. None of the other ancient teachers, neither Confucius nor Socrates nor Buddha, ever tried to do this.

3. He canvassed the country for support. All the villages of Galilee got a visit from Jesus or his disciples. Each pair of disciples was required to find a sympathetic homeowner in each place they visited and use that home as a base of operations to win popular support for Jesus. Mao Tse Tung's successful revolution in China paralleled Jesus' strategy in significant ways. Both leaders were able to garner massive public support rapidly. No U.S. politician since George Washington has ever enjoyed the kind of public support Jesus had, and none since Abraham Lincoln has ever frightened his powerful opponents as Jesus did. In both cases the enemies promptly turned to violence.

4. He kept the pressure on the regime. Each time he visited Jerusalem, he managed to offend the authorities in some visible way. He always did it on the feast days when his followers were in town, then retreated back to Galilee, away from the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem authorities. People began anticipating the spectacle each holiday, when Jesus would challenge the authorities and publicly spread his propaganda. On one occasion Jesus failed to show up at the Festival of Booths (John 7), and the main topic of conversation among the crowds had to do with Jesus' whereabouts. Then when curiosity was at its peak, Jesus showed up at the temple and made another speech. After that, every time Jesus got up to speak, the crowds went silent to hear what he had to say, and he chose the right moment every time. A good example of his timing was his "living water" speech at the climax of ceremonies found in John 7:37ff. As you follow the story to the end of the chapter, you can read how his success at

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Jesus was a political genius as well as history's greatest religious teacher.

trumping the official media show precipitated an intensified debate over how to arrest him. That debate continued right up until his betrayal, by which time his supporters in the Council had been effectively sidelined, specifically Nicodemas and Joseph of Arimathea.

5. Jesus got himself publicly proclaimed King of the Jews. On that famous Passover preceding his death, Jesus brought the voters to Jerusalem, where by voice vote they announced his kingship as he rode the donkey into Jerusalem under the very noses of the Roman military officers, who couldn't understand what was happening. The local authorities understood, however, and they were enraged.

6. Jesus occupied the city and cleansed the temple. Then he used the temple to make political speeches about the kingdom and publicly humiliated any opponents who dared challenge his authority. The reason the Romans failed to recognize the presence of Jesus' army in the city was the fact that they didn't look like an army. Armies normally carry weapons. The local colonial authorities, who did understand what had happened, were powerless. They wanted to arrest him; their hands were tied because they feared the people. Jesus' loyal, but unarmed followers stood visiting on every street corner throughout the festival, oblivious to the fact that they were, in effect, Jesus bodyguard and army of occupation. No military general has ever occupied a city like this.

7. Jesus obtained the recognition of the Roman government for his regime. The Roman governor put up a sign proclaiming, "Jesus, King of the Jews," at his crucifixion. Under that sign, Jesus announced amnesty for his country's enemies by forgiving them. A new kind of warfare had begun. By forgiving their enemies in the prisons and arenas of the empire, the Christians conquered. That is still the pattern for establishing the rule of Jesus Christ on earth. Any other approach will fail to achieve a just and righteous order. It is always those who suffer and die innocently for Jesus who bring real political change to the system.

Jesus was a political genius as well as history's greatest religious teacher. In the matter of religion, he declared the temple system obsolete and predicted its destruction. In its place he gave us the temple of his body (his ecclesia), as the universal dwelling place of God on earth. In the matter of politics, he took on the office of king in order to abolish the system of kingship, substituting the office of servanthood instead; and God vindicated his obedience and endorsed the new office of Servant by raising him from death. This is why the early church declared with love, "Jesus Christ is Lord." It was by his service of love that he took control, and he has authorized his followers to do the same by the same means he employed, and by no other.

The Christian message is not that someday Jesus will return and rule. Rather it is the announcement that he already rules. His kingdom is invisible to those outside but seen by the faith of those inside. Jesus said that when his followers become one as he and the Father are one, that then the world will get the message about the new government (John 17:21).

It is always those who suffer and die innocently for Jesus who bring real political change to the system.

When Christians no longer kill each other on the basis of national identity, then the invisible kingdom of our Lord will become visible to those outside because they will see another government in control of our loyalties. When an obedient church at peace with itself has been planted in every village of the globe (note Matthew 24:14), then Satan's authorities on earth will become as helpless as were the Sadducees in Jerusalem when they saw Jesus riding the donkey and heard the peasants from the villages of Judea and Galilee proclaim: "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

"Amen, come Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

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What is Jesus saying about wealth?

David Janzen is a member of Reba Place Church, Evanston, Ill.

In his editorial (Oct. 3, 2006), Everett Thomas examines Mark 10:17-31, which begins with the rich young ruler, who is invited to give away his wealth, and ends with Jesus' eye-popping promise to his disciples: "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life." What is Jesus saying about wealth, Thomas wonders. Is it a blessing or a curse?

We are tempted to take this passage to mean what we hope it means—that by giving up some wealth we can get it back a hundredfold and still retain God's approval. Our individualistic assumptions and capitalistic context make it difficult for Western Christians to grasp what Jesus is saying.

But Jesus' teaching is no conundrum when seen from the communal perspective that he practiced and taught. In following Jesus and doing his words, the disciples gave up personal wealth (Luke 14:33). The wealth they received came by joining a new spiritual family dedicated to Jesus' mission, through the hospitality and generous sharing of all God's people who no longer claimed anything they had as their own.

My wife, Joanne, and I first had our eyes opened to this Mark 10 passage when we served as secondary school teachers with Mennonite Central Committee in the Congo in the late 1960s. Having given up homeland, family and some possessions (albeit just for three years), we discovered that we could go anywhere among the local churches and the MCC network and receive generous hospitality—houses, sisters and brothers a hundredfold—and whatever else we needed. Our new social setting liberated our imaginations to see what Jesus meant with his hundredfold economic promise.

Now the experience of the early church in Jerusalem (Acts 2-4) made sense to us in a new way. These first believers would have recognized Jesus' promise fulfilled in their own lives. Having given up their distant dwellings, they were welcomed by 100 families and cared for in 100 homes. And God was doing the humanly impossible as "rich young rulers" passed like camels through the "needle's eye," selling houses and lands and joining the wealthy poor as the apostles distributed to all according to the need.

This discovery led our family into Christian intentional community. Letting go of personal ownership, we found an extended family of Jesus followers who in common held houses, lands and other possessions for love and for the gospel. Since then we have found the same welcome and practice of koinonia in scores of other communities and among the poor around the world who survive by sharing what they have.

Every generation has its movements of spiritual and social renewal that rediscover the radical teachings of Jesus. The Benedictines of the sixth century, St. Francis and his 13th-century companions, the 16th-century Anabaptists and the 20th-century civil rights movement for a time have demonstrated that the teachings of Jesus can give birth to the Beloved Community within history.

Today our dominant culture has little truth or hope to offer in the face of a dead-end war, arrogance of empire and ecology-wrecking consumption. However, many young people are looking with hope at Jesus' call to a community-based nonviolent revolution in solidarity with the poor. Every week intentional communities like Reba Place and Plow Creek Fellowship are learning of new groups of young people eager to form such prophetic bands. Networks are forming. Some call this movement "a new monasticism" (see www.newmonasticsm.org).

This hundredfold way of living is easily dismissed as naïve, irresponsible or dangerous. But what if that is the way of life together that Jesus envisions for his followers, where there is enough for our needs and good news for the poor—a clear expression of the kingdom coming here on earth?

Paul and his apostolic community expressed the mystery of wealthy poverty that looks so different from the outside than from within: "We are treated … as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything" (2 Corinthians 6:10) A contemporary community bumper sticker revels in the same conundrum: "My other car isn't mine either."

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **A journey toward benediction**—John Sheriff

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Janelle Bitikofer

Raleigh, N.C., church gets 'makeover'

ABC-TV show also builds a new home for neighbors, remodels school.

During the first week of December 2006, ABC TV's "Extreme Home Make-Over" show brought the citizens of Raleigh, N.C., and the eyes of the nation to the doorstep, hallways and even the roof of Raleigh Mennonite Church. "Extreme Home Make-Over" staff also surprised the Riggins family, who live across the street from the church, with the promise of a new house.

For seven days the work crews labored around the clock. Raleigh's citizens watched or volunteered. While they worked and waited they asked about the family that lived in the house and about the building across the street that was part of the renovation deal. Who are these people? What makes them special?

Seeing God's open door in the midst of the excitement, members of Raleigh Mennonite Church responded. We shared stories about the Riggins family and their faith: how God had worked an extreme makeover in Linda's life long ago, calling her and her husband, William, out of their own difficulties into a life of serving others in Jesus' name.

We described the community services offered by Building Together Ministries, where Linda Riggins works and told how the organization was started by people who attend the Mennonite church. We shared stories about Hope, the elementary school that reaches out to kids with tough backgrounds and helps them with academics and self-esteem.

When our colleagues at work saw the photos in the newspaper, we told them the stories, too. It was a surprise windfall of outreach opportunity.

Many people seemed more interested in the media rush than the stories behind it. But some wanted more information. Some said they were seeking a place of "community"— a church family. Others wanted to know how they could help in the neighborhood or give to a worthy cause. Only time will show how lives may be changed because of Raleigh's Extreme Home Make-Over. But it is certain that God has planted seeds.

By the seventh day of the makeover, Raleigh Mennonite Church had received a new roof, refurbished worship space, kitchen appliances, exterior and interior paint, landscaping and a basketball court. On Dec. 7, the Riggins' home was finished, and thousands of spectators gathered between the new house and the church.

The Raleigh Extreme Home Make-Over show will air on ABC-TV at 8 p.m. EST on Jan. 21.
—Janelle Bitikofer

When our colleagues at work saw the photos in the newspaper, we told them the stories, too. It was a surprise windfall of outreach opportunity.
—Janelle Bitikofer

Janelle Bitikofer

Raleigh (N.C.) Mennonite Church member Karin Shank (right) talks with an unidentified passerby about the Riggins family, whose new house is being built by the ABC-TV show "Extreme Home Make-Over."

Top 10 news stories during 2006 year

Killing of Christian Peacemaker Teams member Tom Fox leads the list.

Pray
for Peace
Act
for Peace

Jim Bishop

Eastern Mennonite University student Lisa Schirch reads from Tom Fox's journal while a photo of the slain Christian Peacemaker Teams member is projected on the screen behind her.

1. CPT worker Tom Fox found killed in Iraq

U.S. forces in Iraq recovered the body of kidnapped Christian Peacemaker Teams activist Tom Fox, 54, CPT confirmed March 10. Fox, a Quaker from Clearbrook, Va., was found by Iraqi police with his hands bound and with gunshot wounds to the head and chest the evening of March 9, according to the Associated Press. Fox was kidnapped in Baghdad Nov. 26, 2005, along with three fellow CPTers who were released on March 23. The four were seized at gunpoint by a group calling itself the Swords of Righteousness Brigade, shown in videos released by the group demanding the release of all detainees in U.S. and Iraqi prisons. (See March 21.)

2. Amish victims' fund passes $3.2 million

The Nickel Mines (Pa.) Accountability Committee met regularly to review and approve disbursement of funds for medical bills, counseling, transportation, lost wages and other expenses resulting from Charles Carl Roberts' Oct. 2 shooting of 10 girls—five fatally—at the West Nickel Mines Amish School. Costs were expected to be significant, even though hospitals and many other medical service providers did not bill the families for their initial services. (See Dec. 5.)

3. Vietnam's 'Mennonite Six' together

The six Vietnamese Mennonites who were imprisoned for various lengths of time over the past two years gathered together in March in Ho Chi Minh City. The six were church worker Le Thi Hong Lien, evangelist Nguyen Thanh Nhan, evangelist Nguyen Van Phuong, pastor Nguyen Hong Quang, evangelist Pham Ngoc Thach and church worker Nguyen Hieu Nghia. Thach was the last to be released—after two years in prison—on March 2. (See April 4.)

4. Three new college presidents

James E. Brenneman, founding pastor of Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite, became Goshen (Ind.) College's 16th president when his term formally began on July 1 (see Sept. 19). In North Newton, Kan., Barry C. Bartel, an attorney from Denver, became the 13th president in Bethel College's 119-year history (see Oct. 17). James M. Harder became Bluffton (Ohio) University's ninth president. (See Oct. 17.)

5. Elkhart, Ind., building project approved

Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board agreed to move forward with a $9.8 million campaign to construct and endow an office building adjacent to the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary campus in Elkhart, Ind., during an executive session in San Jose, Calif., on Sept. 22. The building will provide office space for Mennonite Mission Network staff, Executive Leadership staff and other denominational agencies. Projected occupancy date is spring 2010. (See Oct. 3.)

6. Mennonite World Conference gathering

Two-hundred twenty Mennonites and Brethren in Christ from 50 countries gathered for a Mennonite World Conference "mini-assembly" in Pasadena,

Everett J. Thomas

The U.S. State Department denied permission for 15 General Council members (whose names are on the chairs) to attend the Mennonite World Conference meeting in Pasadena, Calif.

Editorial staff at *The Mennonite* reviewed the news stories we published during 2006 and prioritized them for this "top 10" list. Anna Groff wrote this compilation.

Imprisonment, violence for Anabaptists

Response to Amish school shootings passes $3.2 million for victims, families.

Calif., March 9-15 to nurture the global Anabaptist movement. They came for the meetings of the Mennonite World Conference Peace Council and General Council—meetings held once every three years. However, 15 chairs remained empty, bearing only the names of MWC General Council members who were denied visas by the U.S. State Department. (See April 4.)

7. Passing of 13 Mennonite leaders

During 2006, many significant Mennonite leaders from the World War II (and earlier) generations died. Here are 13 whose deaths were noted in News Digest. The date after each name refers to the date the information was published.

- Roy D. Roth, third president of Hesston (Kan.) College (see Jan. 10);
- Marie Flaming Rupp, Mennonite writer, polio survivor (see Jan. 24);
- Robert Baker, Sunday school writer for Mennonite Publishing House (see March 7)
- Harold Ratzlaff, career mission worker to India (see March 7);
- Clara Kauffman, widow of former Hesston College president Milo Kauffman (see March 7);
- Delton Willis Franz, former director of the Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office (see April 4);
- Sue Goerzen, educator (see April 18);
- Takio Tanase, Japanese Mennonite pastor, translator (see May 2);
- Samuel Stephen, India educator (see July 4);
- Verney Unruh, missionary pioneer in Asia (see July 18);
- Edward Taylor, urban mission advocate (see Sept. 19);
- Harriet Rutschman, missionary with music in Latin America (see Oct. 17);
- Marian Franz, Peace Tax Fund director (see Dec. 5).

8. MPN sells all Provident Bookstores

Mennonite Publishing Network sold the last four stores in its Provident Bookstores chain in October to Berean Christian Stores, based in Cincinnati, Ohio. In September, MPN closed its store in Ephrata, Pa., and sold the store in Newton, Kan., to a group of local investors. MPN leaders did not disclose how much they received for the final four stores because confidentiality about the price was part of the sale agreement. But they said the proceeds would enable the binational publishing entity to eliminate the $3.1 million debt remaining from its financial crisis of approximately five years ago. (See Oct. 3 and 17.)

9. Cheyenne, Arapaho, Mennonite journey

"Cheyenne, Arapaho, Mennonite: Journey from Darlington," a March 30-April 2 conference sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA, celebrated and reviewed the historic relationships and faith stories of Native American Mennonites. According to Lawrence Hart, a Mennonite pastor and Cheyenne peace chief, 2006 was the 110-year anniversary of the founding of the first Indian Mennonite church. (See April 18.)

10. Iranian president meets church leaders

Mennonite Central Committee organized an event for religious leaders from Christian and Muslim faith backgrounds to meet with the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, on Sept. 20 in New York City to discuss the role religious communities can play in reversing the crisis between Iran and the United States. Robb Davis, MCC executive director at that time, and Ahmadinejad opened the meeting with comments about their respective faith positions (see Oct. 17).

In September, some 4,000 Iranians heard these Mennonite scholars at a conference in Iran: David W. Shenk, global consultant with Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa.; Thomas N. Finger, independent scholar at Reba Place Church, Evanston, Ill.; and N. Gerald Shenk, professor of church and society at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va. They were invited as guests and contributors to the conference on the "Science of Messianism" in Tehran (see Oct. 3).

Mennonite Central Committee executive director Robb Davis (left) met Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (right) at a Sept. 20 conference in New York City organized by MCC. Behind Davis is Ed Martin, co-director of MCC's Asia program.

Southern Sudan is beginning to recover

But genocide continues in western Sudan, where 2 million are displaced.

Doug Hostetter

A street vendor sells food in Juba, the capital of southern Sudan. The end of Sudan's 21-year civil war is bringing new life to the city.

While a devastating armed conflict continues in western Sudan's Darfur region, the people of southern Sudan are beginning to recover from a 21-year civil war, according to Rob Haarsager, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) country representative.

In southern Sudan, a grueling conflict between rebels and government forces claimed an estimated 2 million lives and displaced about 4 million people by the time a peace agreement was signed in January 2005.

Today, however, the southern Sudanese city of Juba has become a boomtown as the seat of southern Sudan's new parliament and the base for aid organizations working in the region. This month, Rob and Mary Haarsager, MCC's Sudan country representatives, will move to Juba after living since 2004 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Rob Haarsager says the changes in Juba are striking when compared with his memories of the city. The Haarsagers lived in Juba as MCC workers from 1985 to 1987, in the early years of the civil war. According to Haarsager, Juba was a garrison town in a war zone during the war. Government forces controlled Juba, while rebels controlled the countryside. The city was rife with wartime fears, suspicions and human rights abuses. Now, however, people can come and go freely, and the local economy is growing rapidly.

"It's an exciting time for the local person and other people like us who are moving in and living there," he says.

From Juba, the Haarsagers will continue to manage MCC's work with Sudanese organizations to help communities recover from the trauma of displacement and war, such as by providing seeds and tools to displaced farmers who are returning.

In Darfur, news reports suggest that the four-year-old conflict is widening into areas of neighboring Chad and Central African Republic. The U.S. Congress has declared the conflict to be a genocide of Darfur's population, and the United Nations reports that hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and more than 2 million displaced.

MCC is supporting a peacemaking project in southern Darfur through a Sudanese partner organization, Darfur Emergency Response Organization. The goal is to support dialogue between ethnic groups that have been divided by the Darfur conflict and address local conflicts over land and water rights, Haarsager says.

"We're hoping that even those kinds of efforts will help bring security to certain specific areas and allow people to return to their homes," he says.

MCC is also providing food to war-affected communities throughout Sudan in partnership with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. A shipment of 4,000 metric tons of wheat is being distributed to Sudanese schoolchildren, mostly in camps for displaced people in Darfur.

An audio interview with Rob Haarsager is available at www.dnnradio.com/mcc.—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee*

Moving to Darfur

Rob and Mary Haarsager, MCC country representatives for Sudan, and their son, Matt, are moving to southern Sudan. They have been living in Kenya, but the situation in southern Sudan has improved enough for them to return to Juba, the southern seat for Sudan's new parliament.

First college peace program in Israel

'Laboratory for peace studies' to address practical issues faced by Arabs.

Football fan Joe Liechty will probably miss some of the most important games of the college bowl season. Instead of watching teams battling on the gridiron, he will be assisting in a pioneering peace initiative in a land where sides have been battling for centuries.

Liechty, chair of the Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies department at Goshen (Ind.) College, and colleagues David Brubaker from Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Va., and Gordon Matties from Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg, will be at Mar Elias College in Galilee the first week of January to help develop what will be the first undergraduate college peace program in Israel.

Glenn Witmer, a Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker in Israel, and Mar Elias Peace Center director Marie Loller have spearheaded the planning efforts. Witmer calls the region a "laboratory for peace studies" to which Mennonites have been invited to help experiment.

Elias Chacour founded the college, located in Ibillin in northern Israel, 24 years ago. He is a Melkite Catholic priest and a Palestinian-born Arab-Israeli who has long worked for reconciliation among the Holy Land's conflicting religious and ethnic groups. The student body includes Christians, Jews, Muslims and Druze. A peace center affiliated with the school was started in 1994, but Mar Elias now aspires to become Galilee's "university of peace."

"I find it so exemplary that a community of Palestinian Christians in Israel should be that intent on peace," Liechty says. "Anything you can do to support that you should do."

During the Jan. 2-7 meetings, the three Mennonites are scheduled to join two scholars from Australia and one from Ireland as consultants to a Mar Elias committee working on the peace studies program. The college hopes to submit a report to the Israeli Council of Higher Education by February.

Loller says short-term efforts, such as dialogues and meetings among the region's factions, can have only limited positive effects on systemic issues.

"We believe that it will be much more effective to increasingly channel resources into well-structured, long-term programs that are embedded within the everyday educational curriculum [of the school]," she says. "Applied research and the academic peace studies program will provide pilot studies and a foundation for achieving this goal."

Liechty notes that most academic peace studies programs are spinoffs from programs such as international relations, but that's not the case at Goshen College, EMU and CMU.

Photo provided

Students at Mar Elias College in Galilee will soon be able to participate in the first undergraduate peace program in Israel.

"In Mennonite institutions, peace studies is applied Christology," he says. "From what I know of Elias Chacour, he believes that too."

Witmer says Chacour "keeps reminding us [Mennonites] of his wish to form a closer bond with us, appreciating so much our stance and work in the peace area."

The North Americans emphasize that they are going as much to listen as to speak.

"Putting together a peace studies program in a war zone is a different kind of endeavor," says Matties, associate professor of biblical studies and theology at CMU. "We can learn from some of the practical issues they face."

With nearly 400 students, Mar Elias is the largest Arab college in Israel. It is part of the Mar Elias Educational Institutions in Ibillin, providing schooling to 3,500 students from kindergarten through post-secondary levels. Addressing inequalities between Arabs and Israelis is a major focus for Mar Elias, as only 8 percent of students in Israeli colleges are Arab, even though they are 20 percent of the national population.

The three North Americans will bring to Ibillin extensive experience in peace work, both practical and academic. Liechty served 24 years in Ireland and Northern Ireland with Mennonite Mission Network, helping start and then direct a peace program in Dublin. Brubaker, a former associate director of Mennonite Conciliation Services, was a co-founder of Arizona-based peace consulting organization Cooperative by Design. Matties has broad Middle Eastern experience, including leading four tours to the region.—*Rich Preheim of Mennonite Mission Network*

I find it so exemplary that a community of Palestinian Christians in Israel should be that intent on peace.
—Joe Leichty

MC USA delegation heads to Congo

Fifteen-day trip will explore what church-to-church relations might mean.

After more than three years of cautious exploration and joint discernment, two Congolese Mennonite conferences and Mennonite Church USA are preparing to take a significant step toward closer church-to-church relationships in early 2007. A delegation of 13 Mennonite Church USA representatives plans to visit leaders and congregations in the Democratic Republic of Congo for a two-week period in February.

Delegates from the Congo Evangelical Mennonite Church (CEM), the Congo Mennonite Church (CMCO) and Mennonite Church USA first met at the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Assembly gathering in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, in 2003, with the purpose of exploring a new church-to-church relationship.

"We didn't know where this conversation would eventually take us, but we wanted to be open to where the Spirit would lead us," says Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

The delegation will divide into smaller groups to visit Congolese Mennonite congregations and communities in different parts of the country. They'll visit urban centers like Kinshasa, Tshikapa, Kikwit and Mbuji Mayi. The groups will also travel to visit more remote rural congregations.

"We want to get as broad of an exposure as possible to our brothers and sisters in Congo," says Mennonite Church USA moderator-elect Sharon Waltner.

In addition to listening to Congolese Mennonites and building relationships, the delegation wants to learn more about the churches in the Congo and the challenges they are facing and discern how the relationship can be nurtured in the future. The delegation also wants to find opportunities for its members to share what they've learned with Mennonite Church USA congregations and leaders when they return.

The delegation will include Executive Board members, churchwide staff, pastors, laypeople, young adults and journalists. MWC staff members have served as consultants for this USA-Congo relationship from the beginning, and MWC staffperson Tim Lind is serving as coordinator for this trip. Mennonite Central Committee is providing logistical support.

A recent MWC census shows that the number of Mennonites in Congo is more than in any other country except the United States. In addition to CMCO and CEM, a third Mennonite conference, the Congo Mennonite Brethren Church, is made up of about 90,000 members. Mennonite Church USA and CMCO are the second and fourth largest church bodies relating to Mennonite World Conference.

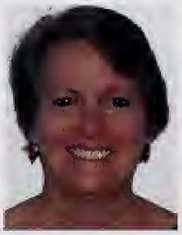
Delegation members include Addie Banks, Bronx, N.Y.; Ron Byler, Goshen, Ind.; Ruth Keidel Clemens, Baltimore; Stanley Green, Goshen, Ind.; Anna Groff, Harrisonburg, Va.; Suzanne Lind, Three Rivers, Mich.; Steve Penner, Reedley, Calif.; Marathana Prothro, Newton, Kan.; Jim Schrag, Newton, Kan.; Vicki Smucker, South Bend, Ind.; Sharon Waltner, Parker, S.D.; James Wenger, Baltimore; and Keith Wilson, Chicago.—*Marathana Prothro of Mennonite Church USA*

We want to get as broad of an exposure as possible to our brothers and sisters in Congo.
—Sharon Waltner

Mennonite Church USA delegation to Congo Feb. 1-15

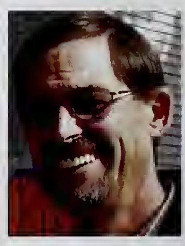
Addie Banks

Ron Byler


Ruth Keidel Clemens

Stanley Green

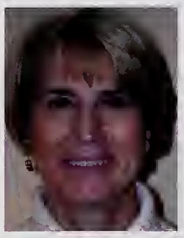
Anna Groff

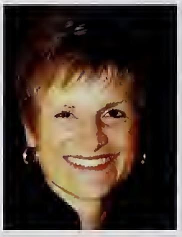

Steve Penner

Not pictured: Suzanne Lind and Keith Wilson

Marathana Prothro

Jim Schrag


Vicki Smucker


Sharon Waltner

James Wenger

A new house in Diamond, Louisiana

Mennonite Disaster Service to help woman who helps Katrina victims.

Erica Ingrahm left her home three days before the eye of Hurricane Katrina swept across Diamond, a small town located in Plaquemine's Parish, Southern Louisiana.

"We got into the car and drove to Houston, expecting to be back in a few days," says Ingrahm. "We lost everything. Everything. My father had eight children. We all lived here, so all of us and our families piled into an entourage of cars and left before the storm."

Ingrahm and her son and daughter evacuated to Houston. When they returned to the Parish, their home had been completely swept away by the storm. The only thing left behind was a rubber tree given to Ingrahm by her parents.

"We cherish that tree," she says.

Prior to Katrina, Ingrahm worked for an agency providing home care for disabled people. When she returned to Diamond, she had lost her job but was soon able to find work as a caseworker with Catholic Charities through Katrina Aid Today, a consortium of social service and voluntary organizations led by United Methodist Committee on Relief, dedicated to helping survivors navigate the system to recover from Hurricane Katrina.

Ingrahm's job involves connecting people displaced by Hurricane Katrina with resources and funding for rebuilding their homes.

It is through her casework with Catholic Charities that she came in contact with Paul Unruh, a community worker with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). He helped her realize that funding and resources were available for rebuilding not only the homes of her clients but also for her own home.

In the conversation that ensued with Unruh, Ingrahm was surprised to discover that she qualified for material and volunteer labor through the Plaquemine's Parish Long-Term Recovery Committee.

"I was very concerned about the lack of funding flowing through the system," says Unruh. "There was a systemic lack of information about donated dollars being available to some people who lost their homes."

Although she was working closely with survivors of Katrina, Ingrahm hadn't realized that she qualified for this type of aid. Unruh referred to the Red Cross, which connected her to funding through a number of different organizations that partner with MDS, providing funding, resources and volunteer labor to rebuild her home.

Andi Dube

Erica Ingrahm inside her small FEMA trailer, where she and her two children live in Diamond, La. Mennonite Disaster Service will rebuild her home.

For the last few months, Ingrahm and her two children have lived in a small two-bedroom trailer provided by FEMA. In a few weeks, MDS will begin building a new home for the family on property she has been given by her parents.

Prior to the storm, she did not have a deed to her property. Her home was built on family land. In order to rebuild her home, Louisiana regulations state that she needs to possess a deed for the land. To solve this issue, her parents allotted and sold her the land on which her house will be built for $1.

MDS opened its project in Diamond in early November 2006, after a few months of preparation. Although MDS was active with cleanup and repair shortly after the storm, the dense displacement of the community following Hurricane Katrina made it difficult to begin rebuilding efforts immediately after the storm. Through this MDS project, a church and several homes in the area of Plaquemines Parish are already being repaired and rebuilt.

There was a … lack of information about donated dollars being available to some people who lost their homes.—Paul Unruh

When asked why she didn't pack up and leave after the storm, Ingrahm's answer is simple. "This is our home."

"The essence of who we are belongs to this place," says Rosina Philippe of the Grand Bayou People, a Native American community in lower Plaquemine's Parish. They have lived in the bayou for over 300 years and hope to rebuild their homes and their community in that location. "God made the earth, and we are the people he placed here."—*Andi Dubé of Mennonite Disaster Service*

FOR THE RECORD

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

- Editor@TheMennonite.org
- fax 574-535-6050
- 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794

CALENDAR

Sustainable Farming Conference at ***Laurelville Mennonite Church Center***, Mount Pleasant, Pa., Feb. 23-25, will offer a place for people of faith to gather and share information and stories and to celebrate innovative farming that builds farms, families and community. To learn more, visit www.laurelville.org/01Program/Sustainable.html or call 800-839-1021.

WORKERS

Buen, Henry, was licensed at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, as head administrator at Central Christian School, Kidron, Ohio, Nov. 19, 2006.

Nickels, Christian, was ordained at West Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa., on Oct. 22, 2006.

Rauschenberger, Elizabeth, was licensed as pastor of congregational care at Zion Mennonite Church, Souderton, Pa., June 12, 2006.

Schultz, Tim, was installed as pastor of Leetonia Mennonite Church, Leetonia, Ohio, on Oct. 15, 2006.

Winings, Daniel, was licensed as pastor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, St. Paul, Minn., on Nov. 26, 2006. He will serve as pastor at church plant, Shalom Mennonite Church, Eau Claire, Wis.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Derstine, Stellan Christian, Nov. 6, to Zachariah and Kara Souder Derstine, Telford, Pa.

Ebersole, Sarah Marie, Sept. 12, 2006,to Brenton and Angela Ehst Ebersole, Brownstown, Pa.

Geiser, Briana Michelle, Nov. 30, 2006, to A.J. and Jennifer Dutcher Geiser, Hartville, Ohio.

Geiser, Kaitlyn Joy, Nov. 28, 2006, to Franklin and Mary Miller Geiser, Dalton, Ohio.

Hall, Ella Raelynn, Nov. 24, 2006, to Mike and Cindy Kurtz Hall, Hartville, Ohio.

Herris, Sam Austen, Sept. 28, 2006, to Mark and Christy Herris, Indianapolis.

Hochstetler, Noah James, Nov. 23, 2006, to Darin and Kris Swantz Hochstetler, Tiffin, Ohio.

Landes, Rachel Seyla, Nov. 30, 2006, to Christopher and Dawn Marie Hawryluk Landes, Lancaster, Pa.

Polen, Taylor Joy, Nov. 13, 2006, to Jeff and Jodi Hershberger Polen, Apple Creek, Ohio.

Ragland, Landin Bradley, Nov. 25, 2006,to Brad and Lisa Ragland, Peoria, Ill.

Risinger, Luke Douglas, Nov. 29, 2006, to Roger and Kelly Risinger, Hopedale, Ill.

Sack, Gabriel Clemens, Nov. 5, 2006, to Paul Sack and Gwendolyn Clemens, Timonium, Md.

Stremmel Leard, Abigail Ruth, Nov. 23, 2006, to Jeff Leard and Andrea Stremmel, Towson, Md.

Williams, Ella Jai, Nov. 30, 2006, to Jason and Marcy Vandeveer Williams, Indianapolis.

Winings, Samuel Abram, Nov. 15, 2006, to Daniel and Kristi Godden Winings, Colfax, Wis.

Wurth, Hayden Tyler, Nov. 24, 2006, to Eric and Amanda Fest Wurth, Olathe, Kan.

MARRIAGES

Bannon/Harms: Lindsey Bannon, Newton, Kan., and Travis Harms, Newton, Nov. 25, 2006, at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

Brubacher/Martin: Lori Brubacher, Elora, Ont., and Ryan Martin, Elmira, Ont., Dec. 9, 2006, at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs, Ont.

Friesen/Morency: Julia Friesen, Goshen, Ind., and Bill Morency, Glenview, Ill., Oct. 7, 2006, in a private home in Riverside, Ill.

DEATHS

Bitikofer, Henry, 87, Hesston, Kan., died Nov. 27, 2006, of a stroke. Spouse: Luella Zook Bitikofer. Parents: Fred and Martha Bitikofer. Children: LaVera Ollek, Evelyn Zook, Melva Janke, Anita Schimmel, Linda Miles; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 1 at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston.

Driver, A. Ferne Hostetler, 99, Woodburn, Ore., died Nov. 15, 2006. Spouse: Lloyd E. Driver (deceased). Parents: Monroe and Adelia Hostetler. Children: Jean Merklin, Elaine Yoder, Elbert, Keith, Donna Landis; 20 grandchildren; 38 great-grandchildren; two great-great grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 19 at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, Ore.

Eby, Naomi Babcock, 78, Susanville, Calif., died Nov. 21, 2006, of melanoma. Spouse: George S. Eby. Parents: Charles and Mattie Brubacher Babcock. Children: Gloria Robinson, Bonnie Hull, Mary Jo Hirlbach, Clifford; nine grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 24 at Evangelical Free Church, Susanville.

Gascho, Nancy L., 92, Pigeon, Mich., died Dec. 1, 2006. Parents: Moses and Fannie Jantzi Gascho. Funeral: Dec. 3 at Pigeon River Mennonite Church, Pigeon.

Godshall, Norman Springer, 89, Souderton, Pa., died Aug. 21, 2006, following a series of strokes. Spouse: Esther Yoder Rittenhouse Godshall. Parents: Alvin and Susan Springer Godshall. Children: Paul, Dorothy Beidler, Anna Mae Landis, Marie Griffith; 14 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 26 at Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield, Pa.

Keeney, William Echard, 84, Bluffton, Ohio, died Nov. 12, 2006. Spouse: Willadene Hartzler Keeney. Parents: William and Kathryn Echard Keeney. Children: Lois, Carol, Bill, Richard. Funeral: Nov. 18 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Kisamore, Nancy Driver, 59, Harrisonburg, Va., died Dec. 6, 2006, of cancer. Spouse: David R. Kisamore. Parents: Harold and Athalyn Good Driver. Children: Travis Scot, Lindsay Kisamore. Funeral: Dec. 10 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

beprepared

"The EMU nursing program inspires me to be a well-rounded person, not just a competent nurse. My professors encourage spiritual growth along with academics; they prepare us as students to act out our Christian faith in our profession."

Rachael Clemmer
sophomore nursing major

Harrisonburg, VA 22802
(800) 368-2665
admiss@emu.edu
emu.edu

EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

Lehman, Lydia Wenz, 91, Aberdeen, Idaho, died Nov. 14, 2006. Spouse: William "Bill" Lehman, Sr. (deceased). Parents: Phillip and Louise Quenzer Wenz. Children: Marlene Funk, Norma Bullock, Robert, James; 12 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 18 at First Mennonite Church, Aberdeen.

Longacre, Elizabeth M. Goshow, 93, Souderton, Pa., died Nov. 13, 2006. Spouse: Horace W. Longacre. Parents: Henry and Katie Moyer Goshow. Children: Kenneth, Henry; eight grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 18 at Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa.

Martens, Mary, 88, Altona, Man., died Nov. 25, 2006. Parents: Peter P. and Maria Braun Martens. Special sister: Elizabeth "Isby" Bergen (deceased). Funeral: Nov. 30 at Eastview Place, Altona, Man.

Mast, Sarah I. Mennom, 87, Orrville, Ohio, died Oct. 25, 2006. Spouse: Glenn Mast (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Elizabeth Hadley Mennom. Children: Dr. H. Linn, Eric, Randall, Kevin; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 30 at Gresser Funeral Home, Orrville.

Miller, Ella Short, 91, Archbold, Ohio, died Dec. 3, 2006. Spouse: Cletus Miller. Parents: Solomon and Emma Nofziger Short. Children: Bonnie Blosser; six grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 6 at North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Miller, Floris Jantz, 85, Hesston, Kan., died Nov. 24, 2006. Spouse: Ivan Miller. Parents: Emil and Sarah Holdeman Jantz. Children: Phyllis J. Miller. Funeral: Nov. 29 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Shantz, Edna P., 94, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 12, 2006. Parents: Annanias and Anna Steckle Shantz. Funeral: Nov. 15 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Moyer, Preston F., 87, Souderton, Pa., died Nov. 27, 2006. Spouse: Anna Delp Moyer (deceased). Parents: Abram and Katie Freed Moyer. Children: P. Lowell, Esther Hedrick, Dennis; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 29 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Pauls, Nilda Loepp, 92, Inman, Kan., died Dec. 3, 2006. Spouse: John A. Pauls (deceased). Parents: Herman and Katie Brunn Loepp. Children: Allan, Jane Roch, Mary Woiczechowski; seven grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 6 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Ressler, Stanford E., 78, Wooster, Ohio, died Oct. 12, 2006. Parents: Charles and Marian Lintern Ressler. Funeral: Oct. 16 at Zak-Monbarren Funeral Home, Dalton, Ohio.

Shore, Floyd W., 91, Louisville, Ohio, died Nov. 12, 2006. Spouse: Viola Krabill Shore (deceased). Parents: William and Mattie Hartman Shore. Children: Myrtis Yake, Yvonne Shore-Miskiewicz, Wendell, Randall; one grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 18 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

Short, Rutheda Yoder, 79, Archbold, Ohio, died Nov. 13, 2006, following a long illness. Spouse: Robert G. Short. Parents: Roy and Pearl Zaerr Yoder. Children: Randon, Royce, Reid; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 18 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Schrag, Vera Yoder, 90, Moundridge, Kan., died Oct. 24, 2006. Spouse: Edwin J. Schrag. Parents: Charles and Susanna Heatwole Yoder. Children: Margaret Klein, Timothy, Susan Schrag; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 28 at Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge.

Simmons, Karen M. Shearer, 52, Telford, Pa., died Oct. 30, 2006, of a heart attack. Parents: John William and Evelyn Nice Shearer. Children: Michael Shearer; one grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 2 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Franconia, Pa.

Weaver, Gene, 81, Hesston, Kan., died Nov. 26, 2006, of complications following surgery. Spouse: Ruby Zook Weaver (deceased). Parents: Albert and Ruth Grove Weaver. Children: Robert, Marcia Mendez, Galen, Greg; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston.

Weber, Ralph, 78, Elmira, Ont., died Nov. 7, 2006. Spouse: Alice Habermehl Weber. Parents: Allen and Laura Weber. Children: Roger, Yvonne Dettweiler, Ross, Steve, Darrell, Darcy, Gary; 16 grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 10 at Floradale Mennonite Church, Floradale, Ont.

Wenger, Emery, 92, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, died Nov. 26, 2006. Spouse: Mary Roth Wenger (deceased). Parents: David and Kathryn Roth Wenger. Children: David, Mildred Gingerich, Beulah Steiner, Mary Heading; 10 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 28 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

Wenger, Ruth Sommers, 59, Harrisonburg, Va., died Dec. 8, 2006. Spouse: Rex Wenger. Parents: Willis and Alice Miller Sommers. Children: Sharla Wenger, Krista Fetterman; two grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 10 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Wiens, Henry R., 87, Inman, Kan., died Dec. 1, 2006. Spouse: Rubena M. Enns Wiens (deceased). Parents: Henry B. and Lena Regehr Wiens. Children: Don Kensington, Larry, Richard, Mary Ann Peters, Dorothy Sand; 10 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 5 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Yoder, Anna Mae Yothers, 91, Souderton, Pa., died Nov. 19, 2006. Spouse: Norman K. Yoder (deceased). Parents: Abraham and Annie Rice Yothers. Children: Wilmer, Esther Kratz, Anna Wambold, Marian Schultz, Bess Anglemoyer, Norman, Faye DeNolf, Russell, Rodney; 23 grandchildren; 51 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 24 at Towamencin Mennonite Church, Kulpsville, Pa.

"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

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Eastern Mennonite School (K-12), located in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley in Harrisonburg, Va., is in the search process for two key positions: ***high school teacher—U.S. history and government***—beginning in Fall 2007 and ***director of development***. This person will nurture community relationships and provide supervisory leadership for the fund-raising, admissions, communications and marketing staff. Desirable candidates will value church relationships, are successful fund-raisers, enjoy youth, create positive first impressions, are energetic, optimistic, encouraging and articulate in spoken and written language. Candidates should be available to begin employment between January and July 2007. Successful candidates will share a passion for Anabaptist-Mennonite education in a Christ-centered academic environment. Please express interest to Paul Leaman, Principal, 801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; email leamanp@emhs.net; phone 540-432-4502; www.emhs.net. Eastern Mennonite School offers a competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with experience and is an equal opportunity employer.

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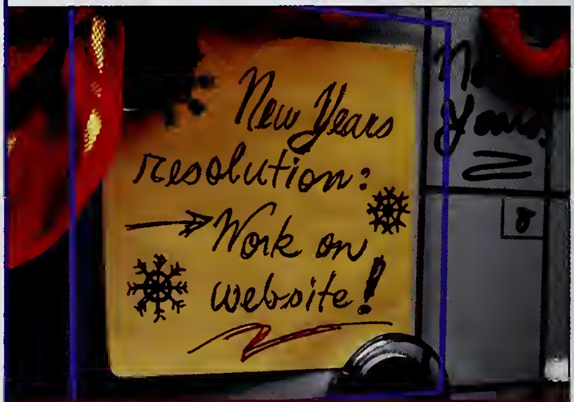

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Lithuania Christian College (LCC) is seeking an ***academic administrative assistant*** that will prepare for and follow-up with president's cabinet and department chair meetings, track strategic planning action plan items for monthly updates, collect and maintain institutional policies, coordinate various academic and institutional events including board meetings and graduation, and provide other support for the vice president of academics. Please visit our Web site at www.lcc.lt/opportunities for instructions on how to apply or email us at opportunities@lcc.lt.

Conrad Grebel University College, a Mennonite residence and teaching facility affiliated with the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ont., Canada, seeks a married couple for the position of ***senior residents***, beginning approximately June 1, 2007. The role involves living in an apartment in the college's residence building and supervising the college during nonbusiness hours. Rent and utilities are free in exchange for performance of duties. Applicants should be mature, responsible and able to relate to a broad range of people, especially students in residence. If interested contact E. Paul Penner, CGUC Operations Manager, at 519-885-0220 x24231 or eppenner@uwaterloo.ca. Application deadline is Jan. 15, 2007.

Frazer (Pa.) Mennonite Church, located 25 miles west of Philadelphia, is seeking a full-time ***pastor***. Frazer is a suburban congregation of 125 members that desires an experienced pastor who is gifted in preaching and teaching and who shares our vision for community outreach, peace and justice ministries, and active lay leadership. Please visit frazermennonite.org or contact Larry Massanari at 610-524-8332 or lmassanari@aol.com

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Talking about sex

Sara Wenger Shenk is an author and serves as associate dean and associate professor of Christian education at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

In our interviews with young adults (published in *Thank You for Asking: Conversing with Young Adults about the Future Church*), our research team heard that "sexual integrity and fidelity" pose a huge question for many of them. They called for more open talk about a subject that has been taught so prudishly and simplistically that it's difficult to navigate the variety of scenarios they encounter. We heard over and over a call from these young adults for us to talk in the church more often and honestly about sexual practice.

Almost uniformly, those interviewed considered sexual fidelity (defined as intercourse only in marriage) to be very important, though they had varied reasons for why they think so. Some emphasize the negative effects they've observed in those who've engaged in sex outside marriage—the pain it causes, the damage to forming lasting relationships, the destructive effects to one's health. Others spoke of the mysterious power of sex, which has the potential to be such a positive thing when it finds its fullest expression in the covenanted loyalty of marriage. Some of the team were surprised to see that "sexual fidelity" was the most frequently rated "very important" practice from the list of practices we asked about because many of their peers are sexually active before marriage.

It is challenging to find ways to talk honestly about sex.

It is challenging to find ways to talk honestly about sex. Formation classes at the seminary where I work invite people to reflect on their personal history. Many of their stories include reference to their sexual history: awkward parental talk, sexual abuse, experimentation, painful breakups, regrets, addictions, sexual frustration and fulfillment. Many stories are about healing and maturation over time, along with a readiness to talk about what one has learned, the good and the bad.

I remember enjoying C.S. Lewis' description of sex as a "cosmic joke." It sure seemed that way when I first learned of it as a grade school girl, overhearing the guys' reckless swagger as they flung around the F word. My older brother was an important source of information for me, so when I was curious about what that word meant, he told me, and I did not believe him. He insisted he was right and challenged me to "just ask Mom." So I made bold to seek out a one-on-one with my mother, who told me that the F word was in fact a nasty word for what is a wonderful, God-given way to make babies. That helped, but it didn't take away the embarrassment and disbelief.

I came of age during the so-called sexual revolution. Whether thanks to my parents, teachers or the women's liberation movement, I was blessed with a strong sense that anyone I dated should respect me as a whole person—my mind, my spirituality, my personality. If they seemed too eager to get physical with me, they quickly dropped off my list of eligible beaus.

When I did truly fall in love, however, I learned how quickly physical attraction can swamp a relationship. After correcting course several times, we decided not to have intercourse until we were married—a radical decision, given the "free love" awakening among our peers. We came tantalizingly close but held the line. We now have 30-plus years of a robust sexual adventure in marriage. We've learned that sex awakens what is most vulnerable and sacred and that sexuality in a mysterious way is close to spirituality. When each of us seeks the fulfillment of the other and reverences God with our whole body, mind and spirit, sex becomes a marvelous cosmic joke, with laughter and mutual delight. My husband loves the line from the Anglican marriage vows: "With my body I thee worship."

What seemed like sexual liberation in our day devolved into what is described by many as a sex-obsessed society today, where sex often seems as cheap and forgettable as a McDonald's hamburger. Most romances on the screen lead quickly to bed with no significant dialogue or real friendship between the pair. A movie we watched last weekend was so strikingly different that we both sat up in admiration. Two people meet on a train in Europe. Because of the chemistry between them, they decide to spend the night together exploring Vienna before he must fly out in the morning. The whole movie is carried by their dialogue, and—surprise—they decide not to "make love." The movie, in my view, was far sexier because of the mutual respect, conversational intrigue, genuine friendship and evident physical restraint.

Along with the young adults we interviewed, I wish we could talk more honestly about sex, honoring our need for privacy in matters intimate while encouraging each other to become more holy sexual beings. TM

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

RESOURCES

Ecstasy and Intimacy: When the Holy Spirit Meets the Human Spirit by Edith M. Humphrey (Eerdmans, 2006, $21) draws on Scripture and Christian tradition—Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant—to show how Christian spirituality is rooted in the Trinity, in the ecstasy ("going out" of oneself) and intimacy (profound closeness with another) marking the relations between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Grief and Sexuality: Life After Losing a Spouse by Rachel Nafziger Hartzler (Herald Press, 2006, $14.99) weaves the author's own story into new research that looks beyond superficial questions about grief, spirituality and romantic relationships. She also considers the pastoral implications of her findings for those who seek to minister to their widowed friends.

Telling Our Stories: Personal Accounts of Engagement with Scripture, edited by Ray Gingerich and Earl Zimmerman (Cascadia Publishing and Herald Press, 2006, $21.95), includes stories by such leaders as Malinda Elizabeth Berry, Liz Landis, Jo-Ann Brant, Owen E. Burkholder, J. Ron Byler, Lin Garber, Roy Hange, Nancy R. Heisey, John Kampen, Richard A. Kauffman, Paul Keim, Marilyn Rayle Kern, Phil Kniss, James Krabill, Susan Mark Landis, Cynthia A. Lapp, G. Craig Maven, Keith Graber Miller, Lee Snyder, Dorothy Jean Weaver, J. Denny Weaver and the editors.

Nurturing Spirit Through Song: The Life of Mary K. Oyer, edited by Rebecca Slough and Shirley Sprunger King (Cascadia Publishing and Herald Press, 2006, $22.95), explores Oyer's noteworthy life and contributions to church-related music and hymnody.

Searching for Sacred Ground: The Journey of Chief Lawrence Hart, Mennonite by Raylene Hinz-Penner (Cascadia Publishing and Herald Press, 2006, $21.95) grows out of a white Mennonite woman's driving curiosity to know the story of nationally known Cheyenne Peace Chief Lawrence Hart, whose grandfather was born three years after the massacre on the Washita to survivors Afraid of Beavers and Walking Woman.

Colonial Germantown Mennonites by Leonard Gross and Jan Gleysteen (Cascadia Publishing and Herald Press, 2006, $12.95) is the only available volume that identifies the Colonial-era Mennonite and Brethren buildings and sites still existing in Philadelphia's Germantown section. It includes color photos and a map.

Creating the Beloved Community: A Journey with the Fellowship of Reconciliation by Paul R. Dekar (Cascadia Publishing and Herald Press, 2006, $23.95) is a history of the Fellowship of Reconciliation in the United States. It grows out of the author's 40-year involvement with the peace movement.

Psalms: Believers Church Bible Commentary by James H. Waltner (Herald Press, 2006, $34.99) helps readers find their way through the Psalms, encounter God and be led into obedience and praise.

A Precarious Peace: Yoderian Explorations on Theology, Knowledge and Identity by Chris K. Huebner (Herald Press, 2006, $18.99) poses a formidable challenge to mainstream accounts of Christian pacifism. Instead of seeking to effectively implement and distribute a peace whose content is known in advance, Huebner develops a radical understanding of peace that interrupts and puts into question many of our most deeply held convictions, including much of what is offered in the name of peace.

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– MATTHEW 5:9
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Everett J. Thomas

Cows do fall from the sky

When the United States began its run-up to wars in Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq, many Mennonites called for an alternative way to address problems between countries and tried to name a different reality. But those who wanted war gave those calls no credibility and at times derided the truth to which we testified. Such a response—incredulity and derision—is similar to the treatment Japanese officials gave to a group of hapless sailors whose boat was sunk by a cow falling from the sky.

The December 2006 issue of *Sail* magazine reports that a fishing boat sank in the Sea of Japan when a free-falling cow scored a direct hit on their boat. The bovine plunged through the deck, through the fish hold and on through the bottom of the boat.

The fishermen were all rescued. But when they told their story, Japanese officials did not believe them and jailed them for several weeks; the officials suspected the sailors were involved in some sort of insurance scam. But the case was solved when embarrassed Russian officials approached the Japanese with a confession.

Apparently some hungry Russian soldiers captured a cow grazing near a remote airfield where their transport plane had landed. They loaded the docile creature into the plane's cargo bay and headed for home—with plans for a barbecue. But during the flight, the gentle cow decided she did not enjoy flying and became unruly. Her bucking and kicking so threatened the stability of the aircraft that the soldiers shoved her out the cargo door at 30,000 feet.

When Jesus announced the coming of his kingdom, he did not roll into Jerusalem in a war chariot.

A cow really did fall from the sky—and the sailors were right when they told their story. Similarly, most people now know that those who opposed our country's adventurism in Iraq were right—according to the findings of the Iraq Study Group released in early December 2006.

To those who believe that war is the only way to solve problems—or to protect national interests—our testimony about another way seems as ludicrous as cows falling from the sky and sinking large fishing boats.

This incredulity is the basis for the disconnect between the way pacifist Mennonites look at the world and the way most people see "reality." We testify to a reality that seems ludicrous to our friends and neighbors: War may be appealing as a short-term response, but in the long run it never resolves problems.

James Halteman (page 8) sees Christ's way of peace as "so radical that most people will see it as foolishness. Anabaptists were among the first to recognize that true faith could not survive long when intertwined with national politics."

In 2007 our country and the international community will struggle to resolve the mess we've made in Iraq. But this is not the time to say, "We told you so." Instead it is time to ask why the Mennonite voice was not stronger during the run-up to the war in Iraq.

This is the occasion for us to talk among ourselves about what we can do the next time our country catches war fever. We can talk with our children about the way our country wanted to hit someone—anyone—after the horrors of Sept. 11, 2001. Our country will undoubtedly beat the war drums again during their lifetime, and we can ask our children to remember 2007—the year our country had to rectify its mistake.

We also can consider our own complicity in this war: Some of us secretly cheered the capture of Baghdad and supported our government's plans to "build a democracy" there. We listened and watched as embedded journalists reported from the front lines. We grew confident as tank columns rolled across the land U.S. troops had "conquered." But this was not the road to peace.

When Jesus announced the coming of his kingdom, he could have rolled into Jerusalem in a war chariot. Instead he rode a donkey. The notion that a single rabbi on a donkey could launch the kingdom of God would have seemed as foolish to the rulers of his day as cows falling from the sky.—*ejt*

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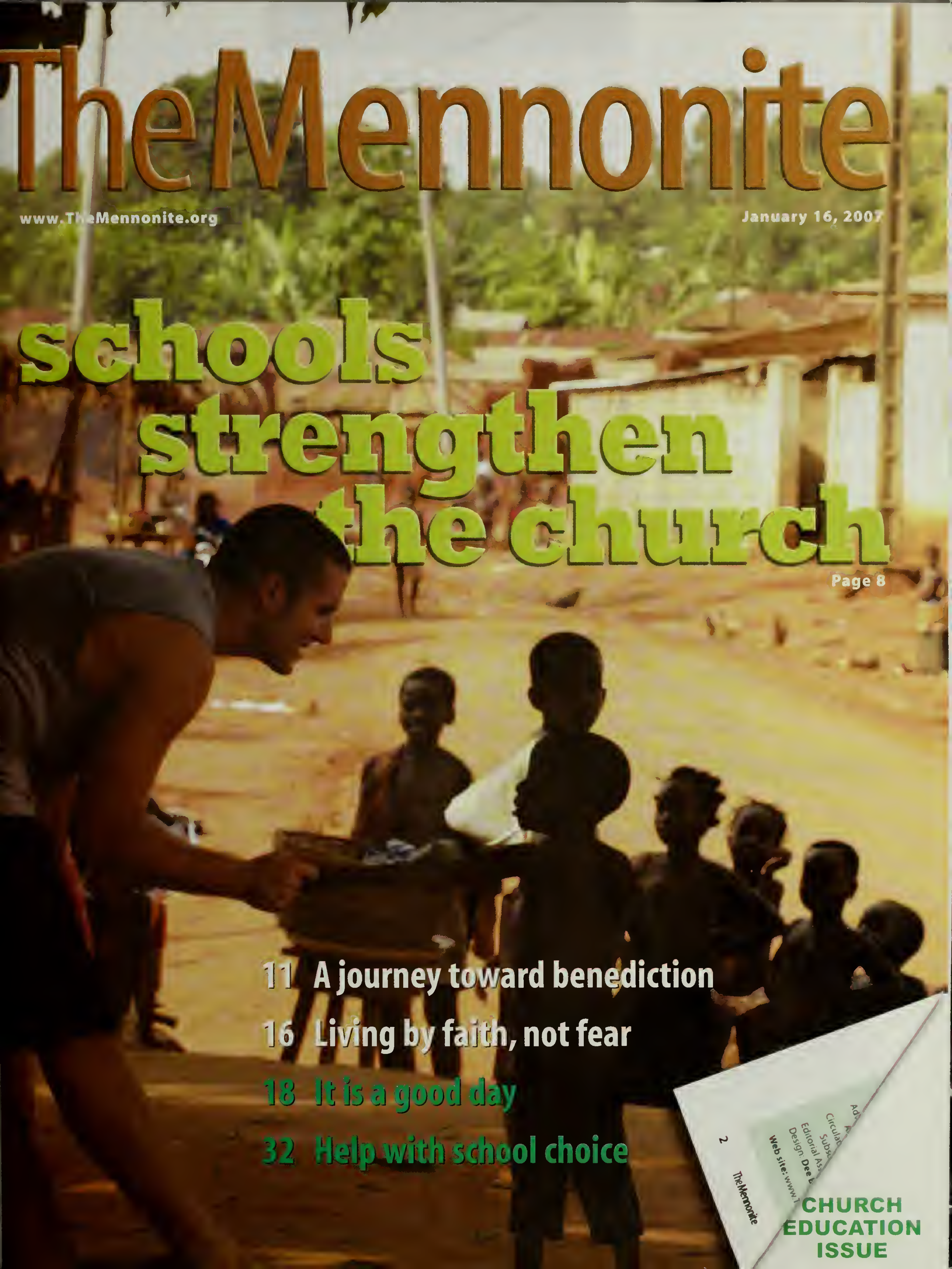
January 16, 2007



schools strengthen the church

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CHURCH EDUCATION ISSUE

Watching, praying, receiving and sharing

Elaine Bryant **is pastor emeritus at Englewood Mennonite Church in Chicago.**

One morning at 1:30 I was fully awake to hear the words, "Watch and pray" and, "What I say to you, I say to all. Watch."

The Lord's words about praying for enemies, seeking to do them good and loving them from Matthew 5:43-48 and other passages came to mind. They brought to mind activities, thoughts and concerns that have been a part of my life over the last several months of forced slow-down.

Other words about praying have stood out to me during this time. In Jeremiah 29:7 (NKJ) are significant principles for those of us who are descendants of African slaves in America. The Lord through Jeremiah sent a message to those who had been taken in captivity to Babylon: "Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace." Of all the ethnic groups in this nation, we are the only ones brought here in captivity and remained in that status for over 200 years. Is it not possible the Lord wants us at this time in history to be instruments through whom grace and power for peace (shalom or holistic well-being) for this nation and ourselves is released in response to our attitudes and actions, like those suggested to the Hebrew-Israelite?

Another Scripture about the need for focused prayer by any—regardless of ethnicity—who are part of a community of faith when a nation or people group has persisted in injustice, unrighteousness and corruption, is Ezekiel 22:30 (NKJ): "So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before me on behalf of the land that I should not destroy it, but I found no one." That chapter shows that many of the things that cause anger, disappointment and sadness about this nation and the church were operative in Ezekiel's time. Is it not possible that those of us in the church need to embrace the attitudes and reasons for why and how we should be praying for peace, as well as those who we are charged by the Lord Jesus to pray for and love enemies and those who persecute us? Could that also include those with whom we disagree about the pursuit of peace and justice?

For a while during my slow-down time, watching TV and reading newspapers, health-related publications and devotionals were my main activities. I gained new appreciation and awe for the Creator's creation of human intellect and creativity, as well as advances in the treatment and management of cancer since my mother's death in 1998.

But these media also stirred up anger, disappointment, sadness and concern about this nation and the members of the church of Jesus Christ. I sensed the need for united, specific and strategic praying and to revise a prayer pattern booklet that had been shared with members of my church in the year 2000. In 2004 it had become a burdensome task instead of the effective tool it had been for nearly five years.

The sharing from one of the congregation's faithful Sunday school teachers and elders about how she used the booklet every day convicted me, and Englewood's new pastor encouraged me to redo it. The melanoma with which I was diagnosed in April is in remission. Thanks to God's mercy and grace and the prayers of the saints (including some of you), I expect to be able to give more time and energy to such a project.

I ask for your prayers for the remission to hold and for wisdom in dealing with physical challenges associated with ongoing treatments. And join me in praying for all afflicted with cancer, Alzheimer's and other diseases for which humankind is not aware of a treatment or process that is curative.

TheMennonite

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Cover and page 8: Brad Graber greets the village of Allada, Benin, West Africa. Eastern Mennonite University cross-cultural program, fall 2006. Photo by Jon Styer.

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

It is God's battle

I don't know whether it was intentional, but I was struck by the comments bracketing the Dec. 19, 2006, issue entitled, "Love Came Down at Christmas." On page 2, Ron Adams realizes his misplaced Anabaptist faith in believing "that evil could be defeated through a peaceful demonstration of love" and ends up "having no faith at all in the ability of human beings to slow evil down, let alone vanquish it altogether." In his editorial on the back page, Everett Thomas observes the equally misplaced faith of "Christian Zionists," who want to bring about the final battle between good and evil—in which evil would ultimately be overcome by military might.

This leaves us, a people of faith, peace and love, with nowhere to turn except to take God at his word and believe that the battle is not between flesh and blood and will not be won on earth's terms, whether through peace and love or through conquering strength. It is God's battle, and he alone will claim the final victory over evil in his time when his Son comes to take up the throne of the world. Can we hasten his coming by increasing peace in the world? Can we hasten his coming by forcing a confrontation? The only answer is the one given us at Christmastime: Love came down at Christmas, and God is with us. With that certainty, we go about doing good and pray, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."—*Carolyn Good, Taftsville, Vt.*

Losing nonresistance?

I read Richard Hostetler's questions about losing his nonresistance posture (Readers Say, Dec. 19, 2006). Since he posed his questions to the church, it seems that he is seeking the mind of Christ in this matter. Thoughtful people agonize over what to do about injustice and murder. Can evil be thwarted with lovingkindness, or must harsh restraint be applied? What is the mind of Christ in matters like this?

There is no record of Jesus using harsh physical restraint against evil behavior, except his action of using a whip to drive animals out of the temple courts and overturning the tables of the moneychangers. He gave the moneychangers a tongue-lashing. He frequently used harsh words against evil and unjust people. Regarding the resistance that he offered in self-defense, he was like a sheep being led to the slaughter.

The apostle Paul counseled the church to leave the harsh action to the government when he declared, "Rulers hold no terror for those who do right. ... But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing." But wicked and ethnic-cleansing governments do hold terror for the innocent and those who do right. What is the mind of Christ, the will of God, in those circumstances? I can only conjecture what I would do in a schoolhouse with a mad man or if I was living in a country where a government with genocidal action is in control. In my noble thoughts I want to stand in the way of evildoers as a protest against harming the innocent. I believe the tools or technique that Christ left for us to overcome evil is to love the evildoers and pray for them. I do not think love resorts to violent physical action, although it may resort to hard and harsh words.—*John Otto, Newton, Kan.*

Richard Hostetler's letter asks the reader to consider the effectiveness of a nonresistant stance when confronted with violent evil (Readers Say, Dec. 19, 2006). Should Christians become more "realistic" and in certain cases use violence to end violence? Perhaps a more relevant question might be how can Christians use nonviolent resistance to counter the violence that too often afflicts our world. The point has often been made that if the Christians of pre-war Germany had taken a stand against the hypernationalism and violent tactics of the infant Nazi party, perhaps places like Auschwitz would not have been called into being. And Hostetler's Amish schoolhouse scenario presents only a black or white choice: either kill or "stand by" and watch the killing. Are there no other alternatives? Would it have been possible to stand between the killer and his intended victims, for instance, laying down one's own life to possibly save theirs? As an often-timid follower of the Prince of Peace, how much am I personally willing to suffer in order to end spirals of violence?
—*Hank Rossiter, Dalton, Ohio*

IN THIS ISSUE

In this annual issue featuring Mennonite schools, Loren Swartzendruber writes: "Parents and church leaders should take their role seriously ... in the college choice decisions of their youth. Not because the schools need the students but because the church needs the graduates" (page 8). John Sheriff (page 11) describes Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., as a place where "love in league with reason gives space to grow in faith." Richard Thomas (page 16) describes how Mennonite schools in Lancaster (Pa.) County responded to security issues after the Oct. 2, 2006, shootings at an Amish school. Carlos Romero (page 18) identifies broader problems confronting church education, including "the decline in Mennonite students attending our schools." Finally, Anna Groff (page 14) reviews the biggest problem of all: the decline in funding for Racial/Ethnic Leadership Education.—*Editor*

Re Richard Hostetler's candid reflections on the Holocaust and school shootings (Readers Say, Dec. 19, 2006): I believe it is not the role of Christians to bring justice to those who do evil but also that God does not reserve justice for eternity. It was for situations such as these that we have civil authorities.

Scattered throughout the New Testament are examples of Christians interacting with government. Jesus taught us to walk an extra mile if a soldier commanded us to carry his goods. As unpopular as Roman taxation may have been, he said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's." In Romans 13 Paul recognized that the "authorities that exist have been established by God." In Ephesians 6 and Philemon 1, Paul could have decried the injustice of slavery but instead recognized the law and government that was in authority. Paul personally intervened for Onesimus by offering, "If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me."

It is time for Anabaptists to embrace our responsibility to offer healing and mercy instead of bemoaning the instances when our government doesn't.—*Steven J. Harnish, Lancaster, Pa.*

End silence about addictions

Re the Dec. 5, 2006, plea to "End the Silence About Addiction" (Ronald J. Hunsicker's Speaking Out): We have been told by professionals that 10 percent of those who drink socially become addicted. Zero percent of abstainers experience alcohol addiction. Hunsicker is to be commended for calling our attention to addictions.

However, I question his proposed solution. It can be seen as being irresponsible for the community not to hold the alcohol industry accountable for the havoc resulting from the product they promote. A more responsible response would be to advocate a government addiction program funded by an adequate tax on alcohol. In Oregon the gambling industry pays for treatment for gambling addiction. This could be an appropriate model. —*Clif Kenagy, Albany, Ore.*

Re "End the Silence About Addiction" by Ronald Hunsicker: Here is a person who understands the ins and outs of this issue that is much higher on the medical profession's list than it is in the church.

As a recovering chemical-dependent person who spent six years working as a spiritual adviser, counselor and therapist within the field, I can tell you that the closure of Kings View Hospital—that had one of the strongest chemical dependency programs on the West Coast—was caused by a lack of interest on the part of insurance companies to cover a dangerous epidemic. Ten percent of the population being affected by any disease would constitute a "war" on that disease in many cases, but not chemical dependency.—*Jim Compton-Schmidt, Fresno, Calif.*

Only biological children have value?

Thanks for the article, "Is Human Life Less Valued Today?" (Dec. 5, 2006). I wonder if our overconcern about abortion and stem cells reflects our complacency: namely that only biological children are valuable. There are thousands of U.S.-born children waiting for permanent homes and forever families. Many languish in the foster-care system, some in group homes and some in institutions. That does not include children who are refugees from other countries. The church appears to be more concerned about biological children because they may look like us, act like us or become like us.

There are cultures that practice "it takes a village to raise a child." I dream of a place where an entire congregation values life by having each family unit expand their family with such dear souls. Then we would be so busy fulfilling God's vision that there would be no need to discuss how to be missional.—*Jo Funk, Baltimore*

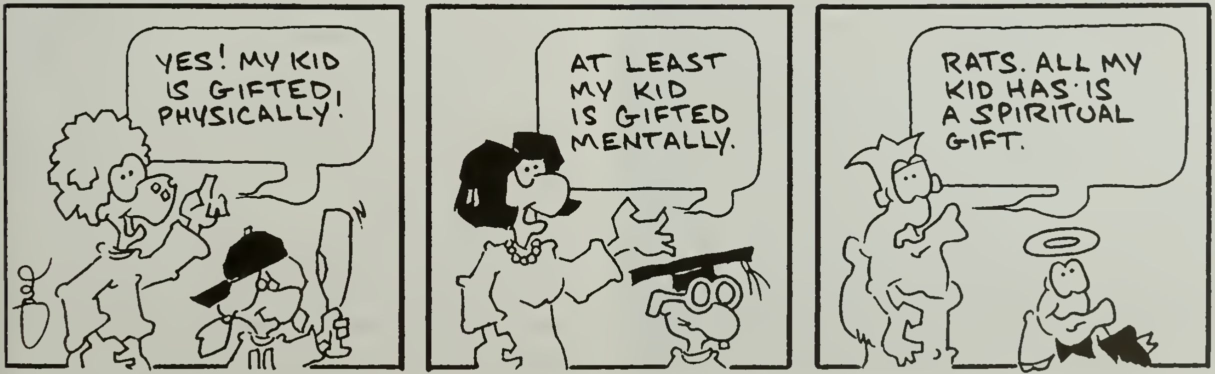
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Should Mennonite congregations provide financial support for students attending Mennonite schools? (104 votes):

- ○ Yes (73%)
- ○ No (12%)
- ○ It depends on which school (7%)
- ○ Not sure (9%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


YES! MY KID IS GIFTED PHYSICALLY!
AT LEAST MY KID IS GIFTED MENTALLY.
RATS. ALL MY KID HAS IS A SPIRITUAL GIFT.

IN BRIEF

New York City Mennonites respond to police shooting

The New York City Council of Mennonite Churches, in cooperation with Mennonite Central Committee East Coast and Peace and Justice Support Network of Mennonite Church USA, has called for a response from Mennonites. On Nov. 25, 2006, New York police shot Sean Bell, Joseph Guzman and Trent Benefield outside a club in New York City. Bell, 23, who was killed, was to be married the same day. To send a letter to Mayor Bloomberg calling for an independent investigation, go to www.nyc.gov/html/mail/html/mayor.html. Donations for an assistance fund for the families can be sent c/o MCC East Coast, 21 S. 12th St., P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500, or donate online at www.mcc.org/donate.—*New York City Council of Mennonite Churches*

Catholic praises Mennonites

Writing in *National Catholic Reporter* (Dec. 22, 2006), Peter J. Riga reflects on time he spent among Mennonites after speaking at Goshen (Ind.) College "a few years ago." He says he came to admire their pacifism and "communal living" [?]. Tempted to join the Mennonites, he hesitated because of his attachment to the Eucharist and the pope.—*National Catholic Reporter*

CPT choir sings against violent toys

CHICAGO—On New Year's Day, 15 members of Christian Peacemaker Teams' winter training group presented a dramatic retelling of the Nativity, complete with a Christmas choir, inside a Chicago Toys R Us store.

The witness, part of an ongoing campaign against violent toys, accompanied the grim news of the 3,000th U.S. casualty in Iraq. Leaflets quoting video game packages that promote "killing without mercy" and promise valuable military training made the connection to the U.S. war in Iraq.

The scene inside the store began with traditional Magi presenting the Holy Family with life-giving, nonviolent gifts. But soon, military recruiters and vengeful video game characters intruded, offering blood, gore and violence to the newborn babe. Joseph, in his wisdom, replied with a quiet gesture of refusal as the choir sang: "Hear our message from on high/who will pay the consequence?/ Parents, think before you buy/violent toys teach violence" (adapted from "Angels We Have Heard on High"). The group then spent 10 minutes singing adapted Christmas carols to the shoppers and clerks before processing out to the tune of "The Little Drummer Boy."

Outside the store, CPTers and supporters gathered with the assembled media while waiting for the choir and Nativity characters to come outside. They held signs that read, "At Toys R Us, every bullet is your baby" and, "At Toys R Us, guns are the stars"—all quotations from video games available inside the store.

No arrests were made.—*CPT*

Mark Wasser

Finding a community of friends

In a Goldensun Ministries home in Phoenix, Ariz., a home for adults with developmental disabilities that receives support from Mennonite Central Committee, Anna Klitzke, center, sits with her mother, Donna, left, and Lisa Hostetler, a former housemate who now is on staff. Goldensun seeks to create a community of friends and activities for residents, as well as weaving a web of support with area churches, especially Trinity Mennonite Church in Glendale.—*MCC*

Cheyenne Bible to be dedicated in Lame Deer

LAME DEER, Mont.—A modern translation of the Bible into the Cheyenne language of Montana and Oklahoma will be dedicated at a reservation-wide interchurch service Jan. 28 in Lame Deer.

All the translation during the 30-year project was done by fluent speakers of Cheyenne. The translation has been recorded by Cheyenne speakers and will be available at the dedication service on CD and cassette, along with printed copies of the new translation. Eleven CDs cover all the Cheyenne translation.

The new translation builds upon the previous Cheyenne Bible translation work of Mennonite missionary and linguist Rodolphe Petter. Cheyenne Mennonite churches strongly supported the new project and felt it was a way to demonstrate that the church cares about the cultures and languages of minority peoples.

The Web site for the Cheyenne Bible Translation Project is www.lulu.com/ccep.—*Wayne Leman*

Wenger Shenk talks about young adults

LANCASTER, Pa.—Last month, Sara Wenger Shenk, teacher and associate dean at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., told more than 100 pastors and other church leaders at Lancaster Mennonite School (LMS) that most of the young adults her research team interviewed want the Mennonite church to continue because of all the "good stuff," but it must be open to change.

Drawing from her book *Thank You for Asking: Conversing with Young Adults About the Future Church* (Herald Press), Wenger Shenk said young adults are looking for a church where they can find "bridge people" who will validate them and a mentoring community that welcomes their questions and insights, a community that is itself open to transformation.

"Young adults want to *be* the church rather than just *go* to church," she said. "They want more of God, not more of programmed religion."

She added that young adults are seeking accountability that encourages dialogue and shared discernment rather than merely holding the line on doctrine and behavior. And they want authenticity that addresses real life questions. If they are not permitted to ask the big questions, they can slip into "unexamined religious assumptions" or become vulnerable to the economic and political agendas of our consumer driven, ambivalent age, she said.

The event, held at the Lancaster campus of LMS, was jointly sponsored by Atlantic Coast Conference, Lancaster Mennonite Conference, and LMS.—*Lancaster Mennonite School*

Anna Groff

ng adult bikers head to Asia in spring

le Bauman and Tim Showalter, Goshen (Ind.) College stu-
ts, work on their bikes for a trip in Harrisonburg, Va., in
ember 2006. From May 1 to July 1, young adults from
ada and the United States will ride their bicycles from
om Penh, Cambodia, through Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam,
finish in Chengdu, China, as part of BikeMovementAsia, to
ize "global community through intercultural engagement."
icipants will connect with Anabaptist and other Christian
gregations, as well as individuals and communities affiliat-
vith Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Mission
work, Mennonite Church Canada Witness and International
tor Exchange Program participants. BikeMovementAsia is
out of BikeMovement USA 2006, in which a larger group
oung adults biked across the United States visiting Men-
ite congregations to talk about the church.—*Anna Groff*

Tour to retrace the route of Claas Epp

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—The cradle of Mennonite faith lies in what is now Germany, Switzerland and Holland. Later, a significant group lived for several generations in the current Poland and Ukraine (then Russia). Driven by persecution, war and famine, most Mennonites eventually came to the United States and Canada, particularly in the 1870s and following both world wars. But some went east into Central Asia, toward China.

Now two Bethel College professors—Jim Juhnke, professor emeritus of history, and Sharon Eicher, associate professor of business and economics—plan to lead a tour that will trace the latter journey. In the summer and fall of 1880, Claas Epp, a visionary Mennonite preacher who believed Christ would return on March 8, 1889, to meet the faithful in Central Asia, led about 100 families from the Russian colonies into what is now Uzbekistan.

The Great Trek tour will be open to Bethel students, who can receive cross-cultural learning credit for it, as well as interested others. "Many people have toured [former] Mennonite settlements in Ukraine," Juhnke says, "but this is the first tour group to follow the route of Claas Epp, at least as far as we know."

The 2007 Great Trek, scheduled for May 25-June 9, 2007, will begin in Ukraine at the former Mennonite colonies of Chortitza and Molotschna. By traveling several miles in horse-drawn wagons, tour members will be able to reenact the departure of the wagon trains that left Gnadenfeld in Molotschna in August 1880. The tour will include stops at Tashkent, Aulie Ata, Samarkand and Bohara and will end at Ak Metchet and Khiva, where Epp ultimately settled to await the Second Coming that never occurred.—*Bethel College*

Daniel Suter, EMU biology professor, dies

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Daniel B. Suter, professor emeritus of biology and developer of the premedical program at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), died Dec. 24, 2006, at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community. He was 86.

Suter joined the science department at EMU in 1948 and later became head of the biology department and premed adviser. He retired in 1985.

The Science Center, completed in 1967, was named after Suter "in recognition of his leadership in the development of the school's science/premedical program and his influence among students during his teaching years."—*EMU*

Lorraine Avenue Church celebrates 75 years

WICHITA, Kan.—Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church in Wichita, a Mennonite Church USA congregation, will mark its 75th anniversary this year with a series of concerts and lectures as well as a service project.

The first event, a concert held Jan. 7, featured tenor Arthur Marks. The second event, to be held Feb. 18 at the church, will be a lecture by Dale Schrag, director of church relations at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. Five other events will culminate in a celebration service Oct. 14.

The church is also working on a makeover of a house used by Youth Development Services Inc. Lorraine Avenue Church has supported YDS for several years with a paper pantry for young single mothers.—*Myra Swartz*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

The oils of war

CEOs of U.S. defense contractors have pocketed huge amounts of spoils since the beginning of the "war on terror," and CEOs at top U.S. oil companies are paid excessively more than bigger foreign oil companies, according to ta new report by United for a Fair Economy and the Institute for Policy Studies. The salary of the highest paid U.S. oil industry CEO, William Greehey of Valero Energy, in 2005 was $95.2 million. The combined income of the top 34 defense industry CEOs since Sept. 11, 2001, was $984 million, double what they received in the four years prior to 9/11.—*Sojourners*

Tony Brown releases new CD

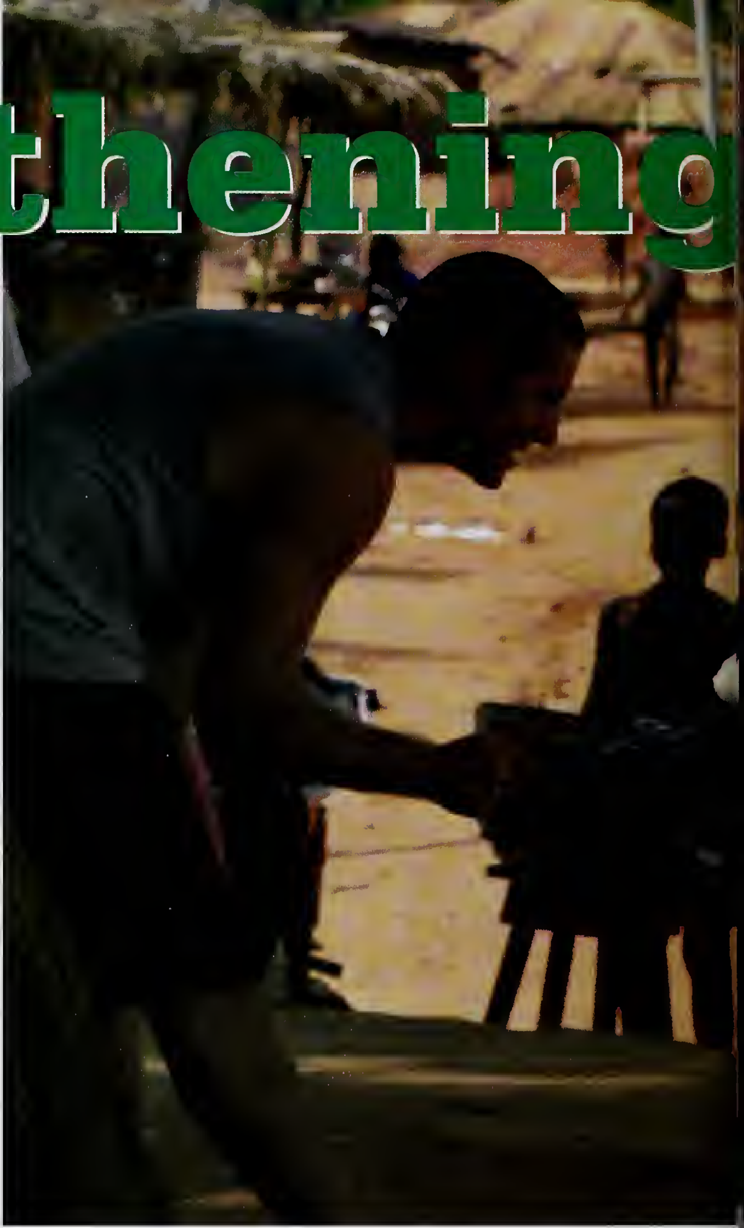
Tony Brown, Hesston (Kan.) College artist-in-residence, has released his fourth CD. The title meshes with the theme he has taken to a number of countries—most recently Northern Ireland, Uganda, and South Korea—*Each Other's Light: Songs of Peace, Hope, and Justice*. He says the title song, "Each Other's Light," was written by Alia Gonzalez, a violinist and composer from Houston and daughter of one of his Goshen (Ind.) College roommates, Badewe Khader, a Palestinian who married Joy Kauffman, a 1969 graduate of Hesston. The CD is available for $15 online at Brown's Web site: www.anthonybrownbaritone.net. —*Hesston College*

Strengthening

by Loren Swartzendruber

Mennonite educational institutions contribute to the missional vision of the church.

Anabaptists believe that each individual is invited into a personal relationship with God through Jesus, we join a visible community of faith called the church, and we humbly strive to follow Jesus in daily life.



Pat and I were attending an Evangelical Free congregation near Iowa City in the early 1970s. At the too-young age of 23 I was chairing the board of elders, and we were serving as youth sponsors. Our Christian education teachers were seminary graduates doing doctoral work at the University of Iowa. The pastor and several lay leaders encouraged me to prepare for a vocation in pastoral ministry. Would I enroll in a Mennonite seminary or attend a seminary of another denomination?

A Mennonite pastor and my father-in-law, also a longtime pastor, encouraged us to return to the Mennonite church. Reading *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision* by Guy F. Hershberger helped me reclaim the central theological values I had received from the congregation of my childhood, four years at Iowa Mennonite School, Kalona, and one year at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), Harrisonburg, Va. We were convinced Anabaptists and will always be grateful for rediscovering the theological perspectives and community of our roots.

These six habits of the missional church have been identified: Practice God's presence and care; turn, repent and receive God's grace; seek to do what Jesus is doing; weave strangers into the fabric of fellowship; proclaim forgiveness, justice, truth and peace; seek to say what Jesus is saying. Our church schools are contributing to the missional vision of the church by modeling and encouraging these habits.

Consciously or not, every follower of Jesus chooses a theological tradition and a community of faith. Anabaptists, like other followers of Jesus, emphasize a personal relationship with God through the saving grace of Christ. We have also understood that Jesus, through both his life and teaching, demonstrated how we should live. We dare to proclaim, "Jesus said what he meant, meant what he said and was talking to us." Unlike many Christians, we are not dispensationalists. Jesus' hard sayings are not only relevant for a future time. And Jesus was not articulating impossibly high expectations that only the religious few could hope to attain. Anabaptists believe that each individual is invited into a personal relationship with God through Jesus, we join a visible community of faith called the church, and we humbly strive to follow Jesus in daily life.

'The world needs the Mennonite witness': To claim a particular theological tradition, such as Anabaptist, is not to arrogantly suggest that we have a corner on the truth. However, Christians of many traditions have been amazed at what God has done in the world through a relatively small group. Over the past three decades many people have said to me, "Don't give up the strengths of the Anabaptist witness." The pastor of Riverside Church in New York City told me just three years ago, "The world needs the Mennonite witness now more than ever. Please don't ever become like everyone else."

the church

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What does it take for us to encourage our children and grandchildren to join this movement of God's people? How does a believers' church (one that comprises voluntary believers rather than coerced adherents) provide meaningful opportunities for the next generation to claim the faith as their own? What can the church do to invite others to join this movement? We need vital congregations energized by the call to participate in God's mission in the world. We need leaders in local congregations, pastors and lay folks, who are excited about what God is doing in and among us. From my experiences as a pastor and college president I am convinced that a commitment to historical Anabaptist beliefs is not always a barrier to evangelism and mission. Indeed, many in our society are seeking a place to belong. They want to join a people who desire to be agents of God's healing and hope in the world.

The schools of Mennonite Church USA, from kindergarten through seminary, exist to strengthen the church. Our calling is to prepare graduates who will use their gifts in service to transform the world. Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that alumni of our Mennonite colleges are far more likely to participate as adult members of the Mennonite church. In fact, contrary to popular assumptions, the greatest loss of our youth from the church (of any denomination) is from the group that did not attend college. That is not to say that formal education is more important than Christian faith. It is to counter a common myth that Mennonite schools do not promote faith.

Our seminaries prepare pastors for congregations, and we are addressing precisely the question of what it means to train leaders who will serve a missional church.

The claims of Christ: Each year many international students join us at all levels. Many return to their home countries to be agents of God's love and reconciliation in challenging environments. None of our schools enrolls only Mennonite students. While some of these graduates choose to join the Mennonite church and some become leaders among us, many return to their faith traditions with a different understanding of the Bible. Some

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

of our students come without any faith commitment, and it is our opportunity to invite them to consider the claims of Christ on their lives. All are profoundly shaped by their sojourn among us.

The schools of Mennonite Church USA, from kindergarten through seminary, exist to strengthen the church.

The Christian worldview of our students is also formed by the experience of living in other cultures. Mennonites understand that Jesus calls us to care for the whole world. Within the higher education community, Mennonite colleges are viewed as leaders in cross-cultural education.

We in the United States are surrounded by a culture that celebrates nationalism. The line between church and state is blurred. A gathering of Mennonite school educators just two weeks after Sept. 11, 2001, was the occasion of much soul-searching because we were reminded how difficult it is to be leaders who challenge the prevailing assumption that retaliation is the best course of action. We are missional when our students regularly hear the call to proclaim peace.

In a prayer service after those horrific events of 9/11, one of our colleges invited students, faculty and staff to pray for a spirit of redemption rather than retaliation. A Roman Catholic student approached the leaders of her diocese with a request to duplicate that worship service. It turned out to be a wonderful experience for those whose inclination was to react in different ways. Several recent graduates of this same Mennonite college, who came from other backgrounds, are now enrolled in Mennonite seminaries or serving as pastors in our fellowship.

Secular colleges: Having visited more than 230 congregations in the past three decades, I have heard all the objections to Mennonite education. Some parents have suggested our youth will be more "missional" by attending secular colleges. While true for a few, the majority of Mennonite students enrolled in other-than-Mennonite colleges are not engaged in on- or off-campus fellowships. The pastors of one Mennonite congregation near a state university report that Mennonite students who attend a public institution for programs not available in Mennonite colleges will tend to participate in their congregation. A larger segment, however, who could have found their academic programs in a Mennonite college are absent from any Christian fellowship.

Some students resist attending a Mennonite college because they think it will offer little more than their experience of a church high school. A high school, by definition, reflects its geographical and regional demographics; our colleges draw students from across North America and around the world.

Having served with the former Mennonite Board of Education, as president of Hesston (Kan.) College, and now at EMU, I am painfully aware of our imperfections. The stories of failures and mistakes are known, and within a small denomination they circulate rapidly. Another myth is that some schools, particularly Christian colleges, do not experience the same challenges as secular ones. With all I know by personal experience within our institutions and from many conversations with presidents of other institutions, there is no place I would rather trust with the education of my children than a Mennonite school. There is a significant value-added difference in our Mennonite schools.

Mentors: Parents and church leaders should take their roles seriously as mentors in the college choice decisions of our youth. Not because the schools need the students but because the church needs our graduates. Would any parent or church leader give an 18-year-old high school graduate carte blanche authority to invest thousands of someone else's dollars in the stock market or in a business? Why should we think differently with respect to the investment of education dollars? And with the availability of financial aid, the net cost of attending a church school is often considerably less than most people assume. The fact is that median family incomes in many public colleges are higher than those of private institutions.

Parents and church leaders should take their roles seriously as mentors in the college choice decisions of our youth.

If I was not convinced that Mennonite schools contribute much to the missional calling of the church, I would resign my leadership role immediately. I and other leaders of Mennonite schools are committed to this enterprise because we love the church. Our deepest joy comes when we see the transformation of students. We are energized by witnessing the amazing contributions our alumni are making in the church and around the world. It is our sincere desire to be partners with families and congregations in nurturing the next generation to take their Christian vocation seriously.

Loren Swartzendruber is president of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Courtesy Bethel College. Photographer: Aislinn Conrad

A *journey* toward benediction

by John Sheriff

How a motto on a bedroom wall set the course for a Mennonite teacher

When I was a child about 6 or 7 years old, my family lived in the Ozarks, in a country church parsonage that was set behind a small white frame church. We used wood to fuel both the heating stove and the cooking stove, and the only running water in the house was the cistern pump mounted beside the kitchen sink. A saying hung on a wall in our home that I could see from my bed on the top bunk of the bunk beds I shared with one of my brothers. Written in silver, glittery letters on a framed red card about 6 x 8 inches, it read, "One life to live/ 'Twill soon be past/ What's done for Christ/ Will surely last."

Four lines, four syllables in each line and the second and fourth lines rhyming. Someone had tried to capture the whole of human experience and Christian faith in a short verse and make it memorable. It worked for me. It is one of those memories from my parental home I have carried with me. "Memory knows" (to borrow words from William Faulkner) that the text is about setting

Someone had tried to capture the whole of human experience and Christian faith in a short verse and make it memorable. It worked for me.

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priorities, answering the question What is worth aspiring to, striving for, achieving?

I mark that motto as the beginning of a path leading toward authentic Christian faith—passing through youthful years of revivals, sermons, Sunday school lessons, Christian high school and church-related colleges of my denominational identity, pastoring a church during my senior year of college, choosing to defer seminary and an assistantship to teach beginning Greek for a year of graduate study in English.

As a college student I chafed under the presumption of my teachers that the biblical texts had already been authoritatively interpreted and that my job was to learn both the right questions and the right answers. I turned to literature and philosophy as major concentrations of study, even though I planned to go into Christian ministry. I saw such study as offering space to confront honestly the big questions of meaning. I grasped onto the lines from Alfred Lord Tenneyson's poem "In Memoriam":

"There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds."

After all, how can one be genuinely honest with oneself and come to authentic faith without struggling to make sense of the teachings and experiences of others? I was not rejecting authority or orthodoxy but seeking grounds for my faith that I could embrace with integrity.

The literature courses I teach are simply consistent with the character of an educational community that makes real the infinite worth and acceptance of every person.

'Tight as bark on trees': Eleven months later, at age 23, I possessed a master's degree in English. Elsie and I had a new-born son in the home. Needing a job, I was invited to be an instructor of English at a Mennonite College in Kansas—Bethel College. A new set of questions: What would this new environment be like? Who were Mennonites? "They're good people and do a lot of good, but they're part of the social gospel movement and neglect a spiritual relationship with God," I was told when I shared with friends where I was going. "As a group they help the poor and support missions, but they are clannish and as tight as bark on trees."

What I encountered was an environment characterized mainly by a generosity of spirit. I was welcomed as a Christian colleague simply on the basis of my own witness. There was no requirement to sign any statement of faith or agree with certain doctrines. I saw quickly that people at this college even took pride in the fact that there was no coercion in matters of faith and that there was no authoritative book of discipline or other church canon to which Mennonites must subscribe. My questions were welcomed as a sign of spiritual health, not of rebellion or heretical thinking.

Thirty nine years later, after joining the college and later the Mennonite church, after teaching generations of students, after convocations, lectures, chapel services, lunch table conversations, faculty politics, board, alumni and church meetings, after serving eight years as academic dean and one year as interim president, I find myself being asked by those who care, "What stays with you the latest and deepest? … What deepest remains?" (Whitman, "The Wound-Dresser").

A flock of memories rise up at that question, too many to recount. Above the satisfactions of the personal milestones in a rich career rises the awareness that the Christ-centered consciousness awakened by the motto on my bedroom wall has been cultivated in this place, among these people.

In my first semester of college teaching, I was invited to meet with a group of ministers who were being hosted on campus. One of the pastors asked me, "What makes the courses you teach any different from the same courses taught at a state university? What gives quality to what you do, or what Bethel does?" As interim president I tried to answer that question when I spoke to students and in churches. I wish I could have said this at age 23: "I make love my goal. That's the difference. The literature courses I teach are simply consistent with the character of an educational community that makes real the infinite worth and acceptance of every person, that enacts in real, relational ways, the commandment to love one's neighbor, that embodies the loving character of God, that brings together scholarship and faith, knowledge and love, critical judgment and a welcoming embrace. The difference is Christ's spirit of love."

Love in league with reason: St. Paul's admonition to "make love your goal" comes just after his secular argument that even the greatest achievements in languages, learning, power, philanthropy or service, without one essential thing, love, are vanity, nothing, mere chasing after the wind, a waste. How much better it is to say how great those human achievements are with love, to say that love in league with reason gives space to grow in faith. To try to have faith or love or reason without the mutual interdependence of all three is simply to destroy the value of the very thing one seeks to treasure; to integrate them is the essence of Christlikeness.

Looking back, I am grateful I am the beneficiary of both an earlier, more intrusive form of evangelism and in the Bethel years a gentler form. In my spiritual journey, I value this college and its Anabaptist style of Christianity most for encouraging a faith open to critique, connecting moral accountability to the possibility of self-controlled behavior (symbolized by adult baptism), encouraging correspondence of deeds with testimony and reason, testing all interpretations of Scripture against the actions and teachings of Jesus, testing that understanding against the interpretation and understanding of a community of trusted believers and respecting diversity of interpretation as well as diversity of people.

I received great satisfaction last August, when the Bethel faculty, staff and members of the Board of Directors engaged in a workshop to articulate how and why Anabaptist thought and practice can and must inform the future of Bethel College. And I am grateful to Ruby Stucky for funding this important work in honor of her husband, the late Harley J. Stucky, who taught history and government at Bethel and who evidenced throughout his life a passion for both Anabaptist-Mennonite history and Mennonite higher education. In the words of Brett Dewey, one of the workshop planners: "To adhere to Christian values in the Anabaptist tradition means to take Jesus Christ seriously in all areas of life; to refuse the distinction between inner piety and public politics; to attend to our personal holiness, not just as moral beings but as spiritual ones; to be people of peace, whether in politics, social action, rhetoric, personal habits or spirituality." Such adherence to Christian values will enable Bethel to continue providing education that integrates scholarship, service and discipleship.

To adhere to Christian values in the Anabaptist tradition means to take Jesus Christ seriously in all areas of life; to refuse the distinction between inner piety and public politics.—Brett Dewey

An Anabaptist style: My fortuitous journey has allowed me to participate in a unique educational institution that practices an Anabaptist style of Christianity. By weaving together a student-centered learning environment, exceptional scholarship and Anabaptist Christian values,

- Bethel makes real the infinite worth and acceptance of every person;
- We graduate students who can be trusted to tackle the world's tough problems on our behalf;
- We graduate people who passionately oppose the use of reason to justify unloving acts, whether the arguments be made by religious or political leaders;
- We graduate people who make love their goal in personal and global relationships;
- We graduate students who know that character is higher than intellect, that grace and humility and acceptance come from seeing oneself as part of the whole web of life, that God is love and those who love are in God and God is in them.

What a gift it has been to be free to join others in this Mennonite community in pursuit of this Christian quest of learning and faith.

"One life to live
'Twill soon be past
What's done for Christ
Will surely last."

John Sheriff is executive vice president for institutional development at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and a member of Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Courtesy Bluffton College. Photographer: Burton Andrews

The strength o

by Anna Groff

Racial/Ethnic Leadershi

With the structuring of the new denomination, Mennonite Church USA, the funding support for the church's Racial/Ethnic Leadership Education (RELE) programs has struggled. Something needs to change for these to continue.

"It was one of the consequences no one thought about … how transformation changes would affect programs like these," says Carlos Romero, executive director of Mennonite Education Agency (MEA), which oversees RELE.

The RELE fund saw a 15.26 percent increase in income from last year. However, the $118,004 in revenue was below the $143,323 given to the program during the fiscal year ending in June 2003. The highest RELE revenue was $232,618 for the year ending in June 2000.

"The church has not said in an intentional way, 'We do not want to support RELE.' It's just that these small programs have gotten lost," Romero says.

RELE includes the Lark leadership scholarship program for Mennonites who are African-American, Native Education and Training (NET) and education programs for Hispanic Mennonites (see box). There also are limited funds available for church members of other racial/ethnic groups.

Romero says cutting staff or students is a consequence of the budget decreases. In one area Mennonite Church USA talks about keeping our commitment to antiracism, but there seems to be "a disconnect between our commitment and the decreasing funds," he says.

In 2002-03, the Lark and Hispanic Education in Theology and Leadership programs each had budgets of $86,500, and NET had a budget of $14,500. A significant decline in contributions required overall RELE budget cuts of $115,000 in 2005. By 2006, Lark had $32,000, HETL had $36,037 and NET had $6,000.

One reason Romero offers for the RELE funding shortfalls is the transformed organization of the church into Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. For example, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada used to support RELE strongly, but that money was "cut overnight with the creation of Mennonite Church USA," he says.

The Northwest Conference, which is now Alberta Conference, used to send several students each year to participate in the former HETL program at Goshen (Ind.) College. The significant decline in contribution required that the budget in 2004-05 be reduced by $125,500.

And before transformation, Mennonite Board of Education had a staff person, Tim Burkholder, responsible for fund-raising for RELE. "Tim took his assignment to heart and worked hard," says Marty Lehman, director of financial development for Mennonite Church USA.

Lehman says there is confusion in the new system with terminology. The old system had three associate groups, African-American Mennonite Association, Hispanic Mennonite Church and Native Mennonite Ministries. When Mennonite Church USA formed, the names changed from associate groups to Constituency Groups and included Mennonite Men and Mennonite Women USA in that category.

However, often many only refer to the three racial/ethnic constituency groups—African-American Mennonite Association, Iglesia Menonita Hispana and Native Mennonite Ministries. Congregations are encouraged to include support for the racial/ethnic constituency groups in their annual budgets, as well as the RELE programs in their congregational annual budget, according to Lehman.

Lark (Leaders Aspiring to Receive Knowledge) leadership scholarship program: A collaborative venture with African-American Mennonite Association and Eastern Mennonite University, which provides monies to students who are training for church leadership in AAMA-related churches.

Native Education and Training program: Runs in association with Native Mennonite Ministries and Hesston (Kan.) College and is designed to help fund education for Native American people relating to a Mennonite Church USA congregation, primarily for pastoral ministry and secondarily for Christian general education in a Mennonite school.

Hispanic pastoral and leadership education: A new program within Mennonite Education Agency that will use the existing Instituto Biblico Anabautista and curriculum from Hispanic Education for Theology and Leadership program, which ended in 2005.

liversity is needed

lucation programs are losing funds.

"Many congregations think they are supporting RELE when in fact they are supporting the racial/ethnic constituency groups or vice versa," she says. "They are not aware of the differences."

Romero says the elimination of the RELE line from the congregation spending plan worksheets is a significant cause for the funding decrease.

Along with the budget shifts, changes continue to take place within RELE. The MEA Board of Directors took action last October to create a new Hispanic pastoral and leadership education program within MEA, because HETL ended.

HETL ended because the money provided to Goshen College was cut in half and because the program, as designed, had served its purpose, according to Romero. "The reality of the Hispanic church today was different from when the program was created," he says. The current dollars go to support the last two students.

The new program grew out of the initiative of Iglesia Menonita Hispana and took shape with planning by IMH and MEA and input from other church agencies and leaders. It will use what already exists, including Instituto Biblico Anabaustista (which has graduated about 1,000 people) and the HETL curriculum. The program will identify several core courses for Hispanic pastors to take and offer them at various levels—certificate, undergraduate minor and graduate credit.

Romero says graduates from these various programs serve the entire church, not just racial/ethnic people. "The program has been successful," he says. "There's no question about it."

"Church and school are strongest together. The changing demographics of the country and the church have tremendous impact on education. Learning to appreciate and embrace our increasing diversity will strengthen us," he says.

Olivette McGhee, president of Native Mennonite Ministries, says NMM has used the funds to support several general education students at Hesston (Kan.) College, as well as fund the attendance of a three-week Bible course by Marion Bontrager at Hesston for McGhee and others.

As a new organization, NMM has not prioritized education at this point, McGhee says. And they need a new staff person to replace Miles Reimer, NMM's staff person.

It's difficult to get people to commit to going away to school somewhere for pastoral studies, McGhee says. And the small amount of money in the fund makes it even more challenging for students considering the program.

Bishop Leslie Francisco III, pastor of Calvary Community Church, a Mennonite Church USA congregation in Hampton, Va., and president of AAMA, runs the Lark program, which has four students: two adult and two young people. For the past three years it has not been able to accept new students, and the staff has been eliminated. But interest in the program continues.

The Lark program gives priority to adult learners but also wants to offer an alternative to young people who believe they must turn to the military for an education. Francisco says the program can encourage those youth who have a passion for ministry and demonstrate the church's "message of peace."

He wants to see funds increase, as it is a way the church can illustrate its commitment to antiracism and work to make that a reality. "The church has asked for more leaders from the constituency of color and as a result of that we've asked that RELE's funds increase to help us raise up indigenous leaders to serve with local churches, as well as the broader church," he says.

For Melody Pannell, the Lark scholarship program made her life "come full circle." Through the program she graduated from Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Va., then worked as a resident director and graduate assistant in the Multicultural Services office.

She received her master's degree from Fordham University Graduate School of Social Work. She served emotionally disturbed adolescents from New York City before returning in 2003 as director of Multicultural Services at EMU.

Pannell says she sees a lack of opportunity for Mennonite youth of color to move on to higher education, and if the church sees supporting these youth as a priority, funds to RELE should rise. It must be a constant, ongoing commitment, she says. "Otherwise, the money runs out; the money ran out."

Pannell says the Lark program provides higher education for students lacking opportunities and cultivates an attitude for students to "give back" to their church communities.

Anna Groff is assistant editor of The Mennonite.

We've asked that RELE's funds increase to help us raise up indigenous leaders to serve with local churches, as well as broader church.
—Bishop Leslie Francisco III

Living by faith,

How does the school of a peace church provid

by J. Richard Thomas

At the Lancaster, Pa., campus of Lancaster Mennonite School (LMS) we usually tune out sirens on U.S. Route 30 unless there is a chorus of them. On the morning of Oct. 2, 2006, the chorus seemed to go on and on.

Soon we learned of a hostage situation at a local Amish school. News followed of a shooting at the West Nickel Mines Amish School, about nine miles away. The local NBC-TV station interrupted programming, and students received updates on cell phones. The news spread quickly through the LMS community.

How do we take prudent measures in keeping with our desire to be schools of faith rather than fear?

As the incident became international news, school staff wondered, Could other local schools also become targets of a gunman? What precautions should LMS take at its four campuses? Students, teachers and parents raised safety concerns, and several parents of international students called to ask if their children were safe. We canceled recess at the elementary campuses closest to the Amish school, and later, after being told by Lancaster County Emergency Management (LCEM) that "the gunman was no longer a threat," we shared the news with the high school student body to assure them they were safe.

That evening an LMS administrator attended a meeting where LCEM personnel reviewed the events of the day, discussed school security and shared helpful tips in providing emotional support to students. Clearly the incident had a major impact on the total Lancaster community, not just the Amish community.

The next few days brought many calls from LMS parents. They asked questions such as, "Do we practice security drills with students?" "Are we planning to keep all outside building doors locked?" "Are we considering installing metal detectors at the campuses?" Each campus principal sent a letter to parents, and the following statement about the Oct. 2 incident was placed on the LMS Web site:

"The Lancaster Mennonite School community grieves with the Amish families affected by the tragic shooting on Oct. 2 at the West Nickel Mines Amish School. At times like these we are keenly aware that harm can come from even the least likely persons at the least likely places. With heightened awareness of our vulnerability comes heightened awareness that God is ultimately our refuge and strength. We know that our Amish brothers and sisters, in facing other tragedies, accept their vulnerability in a dangerous world and will continue to live a lifestyle shaped by faith rather than fear. Because the safety of our students is our first priority, we have a crisis management plan and a standing safety committee that address the issue of armed intruders, and we are actively reviewing and adapting our security plans on all campuses in light of recent events. At the same time, Lancaster Mennonite School also endeavors to manifest the peace that comes from entrusting one's life to God."

Police officer: Most public schools in our community have all doors locked, and visitors must be buzzed into the building. Some have installed security devices, and for others a police officer relates to students and provides security. How does the school of a peace church provide a safe and secure learning community? Should some measures be different from government-operated schools? How do we take prudent measures in keeping with our desire to be schools of faith rather than fear?

Staff discussed these questions in formal and informal conversations, focusing on what many consider the three components of school security: (1) building a community of positive relationships within the school, (2) having and knowing the school security and emergency plan and (3) providing a school facility design that includes locked doors and security cameras.

According to Ben Feller, an Associated Press education writer, "Schools already have been ramping up safety measures. These include requiring visitors to sign in, hiring security guards or police to build relationships in the hallway, locking entrances and installing metal detectors.

"Yet there is little evidence to prove these things work. Some research even suggests they may even hurt by alienating students without boosting protection. What does work, experts say, is changing the school culture. It's harder than it sounds, and it means building trust among children and adults so children are willing to pass on their concerns and adults are sensitive to signs of trouble. It also means having an emergency plan for different crises, one that people take seriously and practice."

Prudent and faithful: The shootings at the West Nickel Mines Amish school and the peaceful

safe and secure learning community?

response of the Amish community teach us much about a Christ-centered approach to love, forgiveness and community in the face of a horrific event. However, what else can we learn from this tragedy? For example, how should a Mennonite school provide security for its students? How do we provide security based on faith rather than fear? How do we be both prudent and faithful?

One of the most frequent requests from parents of elementary students was that LMS lock all exterior doors so guests would need to be admitted into the building rather than just walking in. Do locked doors indicate a fear-filled response? For some, it seemed like a fortress mentality that communicated an inhospitable spirit.

On the other hand, most people in our community lock the doors of their homes, many during the day when they are inside the house. This was not the case when I was a child growing up on a farm in rural Lancaster County, and there may still be a greater trust factor in rural areas. But for many the practice has changed as the community has changed. Does locking a door somehow violate Anabaptist Christian faith?

We believe our Christ-centered faith calls for nonviolence in the face of violence. We strive to be a welcoming community while placing our ultimate trust in God. At the same time our faith does not call us to be reckless; we believe it is important to take prudent measures to provide safe and secure schools for the students entrusted to us.

With a desire to be both welcoming and safe, we have chosen an elementary school design that has only one exterior door open to the public. At two of the three elementary campuses, the interior door is locked until a staff person can greet and admit the visitor. This last feature will be added to the third elementary campus in the near future. At the high school, security considerations are part of the final building design now underway for a signature academic building being planned for that campus.

Most local businesses require guests to sign in and sign out. In our schools we do the same but in a way that speaks to our care for each person. It gives us a chance to welcome visitors and determine how we can be helpful to them, just as we do in our homes when guests knock on our doors.

Building community, an important part of providing safer schools, is a distinctive of Christ-centered Mennonite schools. Last year, when developing a strategic plan for educational growth—part of the Mennonite Education Agency accreditation process—building community was identified as a component of the plan. Since LMS began in 1942, this has been a core value.

Building community, an important part of providing safer schools, is a distinctive of Christ-centered Mennonite schools.

Restorative justice: Since LMS merged with the New Danville, Locust Grove and Kraybill Mennonite schools, we have been developing a planned PreK-12 curriculum that includes Christian formation, instruction on conflict resolution, antibullying programs and biblical teaching on peace, community and caring for each other. We also practice a restorative justice approach to school discipline. These programs, at the core of our Anabaptist faith, also help to provide safer schools.

Rather than having a police officer monitor our high school hallways, we plan to hire a youth pastor to "hang out" around campus and build relationships with students—a decision planned before the West Nickel Mines School shootings but affirmed by the incident.

At LMS we seek to communicate honestly that while we will take school security steps that seem prudent, we cannot guarantee security in these times. We confess that our true security is in God.

It is our desire that our students go from LMS with love that is stronger than fear so they can bring healing and hope to a world of fear. If that is a mission we as Mennonites can embrace for our children and youth, do we as individuals have any recourse but to model that love ourselves in our schools, church institutions, congregations and homes?

J. Richard Thomas is superintendent of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School.

It is a good day

Carlos Romero is executive director of Mennonite Education Agency.

Many challenges face education today, particularly Mennonite schools. Our higher education institutions face critical issues, such as the tendency of students to stay closer to home (What does that mean for our Mennonite colleges in relation to where our large Mennonite population centers are located and where they may be located in the future?); the cost of instruction vs. what students actually pay; the cost of keeping up with technological advances; the threat of government action to create greater controls.

Other issues affect all levels of Mennonite education. Enrollment has been a major concern, particularly the decline in Mennonite students attending our schools. This affects the relationship and support of supporting congregations and conferences. Finding people willing to serve in our schools is another challenge. How do we keep true to our mission in a changing culture, demographic changes and a globalized economy? Is it a good day?

At his installation as president of Hesston (Kan.) College, Howard Keim said: "In this time and in this place, Hesston College [I would add the names of each Mennonite school] is needed more than ever. We must take the faith, hope and love of those who came before us and honor it with our own. We must not only teach the Bible but introduce students to Jesus himself." It is a good day when we understand part of our role and call is to "introduce students to Jesus himself."

I find it exciting to see and hear what is happening in our schools and the commitment to academic excellence at all levels in the context of an Anabaptist understanding and a strong relationship with the church. I find hope in the words of our academic leaders and their passion for our schools and our church.

In his inaugural address, James Brenneman at Goshen (Ind.) College said: "Our educational task is not complete by simply becoming passionate learners of all there is to know from the vantage point of human capacity. Wisdom and understanding, counsel, power and knowledge must be embedded in the larger narrative of Scripture."

In his inaugural address, Jim Harder at Bluffton (Ohio) University reminded us of one of the primary reasons for our schools: "engaging the lives of students and sending them into the world as transformed individuals—as our mission statement so eloquently concludes—for service to all peoples and ultimately for the purposes of God's universal kingdom."

In his inaugural address, Barry Bartel at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., quoted the Apostle Paul, who sought to build up the community at Ephesus with these words: "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is, Christ." Imbedded in Paul's words, Barry said, "is a powerful combination of humility and courage. We nurture that holy space when we engage each other in pursuit of truth, at the intersection of faith and reason, seeking excellence. In seeking truth, we encounter God." It is indeed a good day, when we embed our lives in the "larger narrative of Scripture" for the "purposes of God's universal kingdom" as "we build up the community."

In his sermon "Conversations Between Generations," Loren Swartzendruber, president of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., mentioned "three timeless truths that the church [and I would add the schools] must pass on to the next generation: the centrality of Jesus, conversations about faith should engage both the heart and the head, and Anabaptist perspective on faith." It is a good day when we center our educational ministry on these timeless truths.

It is a good day when we can be inspired by the commitment of leaders such as Nelson Kraybill at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., who says: "I promote theological education because the tasks of evangelism, church leadership and peacemaking demand the best training and resources available."

It is a good day when we can look at the five distinctives identified by the Mennonite Schools Council as the mission and focus for their schools:

- challenging youth to Educational Excellence;
- nurturing a Christ-Centered vision within them;
- building a community;
- promoting opportunities;
- calling students to a life of peace and service.

Perhaps we can all claim these values ourselves—not only for our schools but also for our congregations—as we respond to God's missional call. It is indeed a good day.

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Mennonites in the United States: a landscape of change**—Conrad L. Kanagy

Richard Showalter

Bishop Moses Otieno (purple shirt) baptizes one of 23 new members in a stream three miles from the Kiberama Mennonite Church building. These were the first baptisms by the new Ugandan Mennonite Church. The entire congregation walked the six-mile-round trip to celebrate the baptisms.

First Mennonite churches in Uganda

Eastern Mennonite Missions agency is 'grandparent' of four congregations.

A new circle of four Mennonite churches in southwestern Uganda purchased its first property in December 2006 and began the process of registration with the Ugandan government as the first Mennonite Church of Uganda—a spiritual great-granddaughter for Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference and its mission agency, Eastern Mennonite Missions. At the invitation of the "parents," Kenya Mennonite Church (KMC), EMM president Richard Showalter attended the "birth" and explained the family tree.

"EMM sent its first missionaries to Tanganyika (now Tanzania) in 1934. Then in the 1960s the Tanzanians began to plant churches in western Kenya along Lake Victoria. Less than two years ago the Kenya Mennonite Church began sending missionaries into Uganda, and now we have a 'great-granddaughter' circle of churches," Showalter says.

Showalter and Kevin Yoder, a worker in Kenya with EMM and Mennonite Mission Network, attended the first baptismal and Communion service of the new conference of churches and witnessed the purchase of its first property. The constitution for the new national church has been written, and Ugandans are serving as its leaders. They hope to receive national registration within a few months.

"If these initial steps by KMC in international cross-cultural mission succeed, this will be one of the most rapid formations of an autonomous new national circle of congregations EMM has ever witnessed," Showalter says.

In June 2004, KMC sent John Otieno, their first international missionary, to southwestern Uganda. Six months later, Moses Otieno became moderator of KMC and carried outreach into Uganda. He surveyed western Uganda, looking for widely scattered communities where no vital congregations existed.

"We don't want to compete with other evangelical churches," he says, "And I want each new congregation to be able spread easily around its location."—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

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Tsunami village moved away from shore

Mennonite Central Committee helped fund construction of 450 houses.

A. Shaikmohideen

Mennonite Central Committee helped build 450 houses to relocate Idinthakarai, a village in India's Tamil Nadu district.

Two years after a tsunami devastated communities around the Indian Ocean, Mennonite Central Committee continues to help build hundreds of houses for tsunami survivors in Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka. In India's Tamil Nadu state, MCC helped build 450 houses in order to relocate the coastal village of Idinthakarai, which was declared uninhabitable after it was damaged by the tsunami.

MCC provided an Indian partner organization, Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), with about one-third of the funds for the $2 million construction project. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) matched MCC's contribution.

The Idinthakarai houses, which cost approximately $4,500 each to build, were handed over to recipients on Nov. 22, 2006. This is the largest of MCC's post-tsunami construction projects that have been completed to date. Several more large construction projects were recently completed or are underway—including an additional 287 houses in India, 181 in Sri Lanka and more than 300 in Indonesia.

The Idinthakarai project provided families with three-room, reinforced concrete houses that are resistant to earthquakes and other disasters. Additional funding partners included CASA and Canadian Presbyterian, Anglican and United Church of Canada organizations.

"For most people, it's a step up," said Ed Miller, an MCC India country representative, adding that the region's traditional construction materials are wood and bamboo.

Finding the right site for the project was a challenge because of the village's reliance on fishing, Miller said. The Indian government required the village to be moved inland because of the danger of tsunamis and typhoons. The new site is about 750 meters from the shore, which meets the government's safety requirements and still allows fishermen to walk to their boats.

Miller says that CASA is also helping the newly relocated village develop alternative sources of income because the local fishing industry is in decline. This work includes planting more than a million trees on the village's former site to harvest fruit, nuts and timber.—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee*

Correction: Lisa Schirch, shown on page 20 of the Jan. 2 issue, is a professor at the Eastern Mennonite University's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding and was a friend of Tom Fox.

Bert Lobe named interim director for Mennonite Central Committee

Mennonite Central Committee has selected Bert C. Lobe to serve as interim MCC executive director for the next year. He started Jan. 8.

"We had some very good candidates that we interviewed," says Ron Dueck, chair of the MCC board. "Bert brings a wealth of experience and leadership from both within and from outside MCC."

Lobe and his wife, Martha, live in St. Jacobs, Ont., and will move to Akron, Pa. His appointment follows the Oct. 23, 2006, resignation of Robb Davis, who joined MCC as executive director in June 2005. Lowell Detweiler served as acting director since October 2006.

The Lobes first served with MCC in the 1960s in rural India in a famine relief program, and later, from 1977 to 1980, as directors of MCC's program in India and Nepal. Bert Lobe has since served as MCC's Asia director, overseas director for MCC Canada and director of China Educational Exchange.

During the intervals away from MCC, Lobe was principal of a public high school in Saskatchewan and a Mennonite high school in Ontario and served as associate principal at the Hong Kong International School.

In 2005, the Lobes served a six-month term as interim country representatives for MCC in Bangladesh. Lobe has most recently worked with MCC to develop a program to more deliberately engage youth and young adults in the organization's mission. Lobe currently is vice chair of Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., and moderator of the Waterloo Mennonite Church.

After Davis' resignation, the MCC executive committee asked MCC staff to continue moving forward on key initiatives, such as changes in the MCC governance structure, network facilitation, international program initiatives, a salary review and human resources initiatives.
—*Mennonite Central Committee*

Ethiopian college gets used computers

Seminary grad hopes computer lab will generate income for the school.

McDonald

Kelly McDonald, a 2006 Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS in Harrisonburg, Va.) graduate from Hinton, Va., has found a way to combine his technology expertise with his desire to serve and help others get a better education.

This month, McDonald will fly to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to install 90 older computers that were donated to Meserete Kristos College (MKC), a school that trains leaders of the Ethiopian Mennonite (Meserete Kristos) Church, one of the fastest growing Mennonite groups in the world.

MKC began during the period when the church went underground. Now it is working at becoming a full-fledged liberal arts university in Ethiopia. Many leaders of the Meserete Kristos Church have been trained at EMS, and McDonald sat in courses with several of them.

"Having related closely to some of the Ethiopian leaders from Ethiopia, I have seen a tremendous amount of concern for evangelism, the life of the church there and wanting to keep the church strong," McDonald says. "I believe this kind of project will be used to further those goals."

"Even if you don't get that enthused about education in general, if you are excited about evangelism ... this is the perfect dovetail project," McDonald says. "The resources that are going to the school will translate into the mission of the church."

McDonald will only be in Ethiopia two weeks, including travel time, so getting the computers networked efficiently is critical. Because "no one really knows what programs are on these computers or their condition," McDonald decided to use the older computers as terminals. He hopes to remove those parts that could potentially go bad and then simply network them to two new computers he's building stateside. He'll take these with him to Ethiopia and install them as servers in two locations.

One server and set of terminals will be set up in a rented room in Addis Ababa, the capital. There they will be used to teach computer courses. Church leaders hope to use the funds generated from these computer courses to help the school. The second server and set of terminals will be set up in a computer lab on the new MKC campus in Debre Zeit. These computers will give students an opportunity to learn necessary computer skills and may eventually be used to connect Meserete Kristos College with other schools—such as Eastern Mennonite University—for distance-learning courses. McDonald, a computer engineer with VistaShare, has been working with computers for more than 15 years.

"A project like this really gets me excited, because it helps bridge the gap between my seminary education and my computer skills," he says. "I can see how my computer background will help promote education and church growth in Ethiopia. That feels pretty good to me."

McDonald is trying to raise $4,000 to cover the cost of his travel and the equipment needed to network the computers. This project is being sponsored by Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions at the request of the MKC leaders.

Kelly McDonald's blog is at http://fammcdonald.net/blog/ethiopia.—*Laura Lehman Amstutz of Eastern Mennonite University*

New campus for Meserete Kristos College

The college in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, sponsored by the Ethiopian Mennonite Church, plans to move from its rented Kotebe campus into the first building on its new campus at Debre Zeit this month. It is anticipated that the first of the liberal arts programs will be inaugurated in February. The college plans to set up an extension program by renting classrooms in strategic city locations for day and evening students. The education building (right) will be a five-story structure of 91 rooms—enough to house all the classrooms, library, offices and dorm rooms to keep up to 400 students. The cost of the whole building will be about $1.7 million. This would provide government-regulation, quality construction using reinforced concrete and cement blocks with finished interior and low-maintenance exterior.

The photo at right was taken last October and shows Carl E. Hansen, second from left, who serves as interim president of the college. He is joined here by three local engineers.—*Darrell Jantzi and Carl E. Hansen*

Photo supplied

Third Way Café gets Internet questions

15,071 hits in one day after shootings at Nickel Mines (Pa.) Amish school

Third Way Café averages 5,440 page views a day in its efforts to put a public face on Mennonites and respond to the individual questions people send. But on Oct. 3, 2006, the page views at Third Way Café tripled to 15,071 page views, the busiest day of the entire year. That was the day after the West Nickel Mines Amish School slayings near Lancaster, Pa.

The Web logging devices also registered an increased number of people searching for specific ways Amish and Mennonites are different and alike. Common search combinations included "difference between Amish and Mennonite" and "difference between Mennonite and Amish" … or combinations of those words.

Overall, the total number of questions sent the first 10 months of 2006 was 160. Questions about Mennonite beliefs topped all categories. In the years that records were kept, an average of 433 questions per year came to Mennonite Media by email, phone and letter.

Sometimes questions came that appeared to have easy answers, but none were forthcoming. A man called asking for the name of a Mennonite lawyer in Sarasota, Fla. After consulting with a number of people, staff were surprised to learn that the apparent answer was zero.

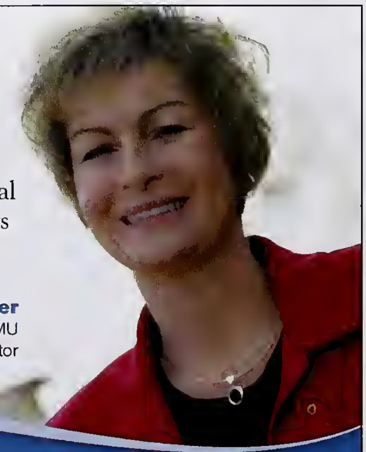
"Sounds like a wide open option for all the 'boomer' lawyers who may want to semi-retire in the south," says Burton Buller, director of Mennonite Media.

People working in various fields of media frequently use Third Way Café to seek contacts or correct information for stories. During the brief flurry of interest in Floyd Landis' Mennonite background after he won the Tour de France—but before doping charges were brought—the *Detroit Free Press* called Mennonite Media/Third Way Café to track down an expert on Mennonites in order to do an extended feature on Landis for their weekly newsmagazine for kids.

Producers for the TV reality shows "Wife Swap" and "Trading Spouses" contacted Third Way Café at least three times during the year seeking Mennonite families who would be willing to participate in the show (to the tune of $20,000 to $50,000 per family). They indicated they were looking for families who believe in "simple living."

Several of the Third Way Café respondents work from their computers at home to answer questions. Jodi Nisley Hertzler, Harrisonburg, Va., responded to most general inquires in 2006 except for several months off for the birth of her third child, when Ruthann Miller Bunk, of Harrisonburg and Elkhart, Ind., filled in.

Jose Ortiz, Goshen, Ind., responded to Spanish language inquiries, and David Shank, also of Goshen, responded to more difficult theological questions and maintains correspondence with several people desiring ongoing dialogue.—*Melodie M. Davis of Mennonite Media*



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Argentina and Illinois churches partner

A couple from Argentina will serve as mission workers in Illinois this year.

During the biennial mission festival of Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Argentina (Argentine Evangelical Mennonite Church), Juan Sieber challenged the 500 people in attendance to imagine what great ministries God might carry out through them in the next 50 years.

Nearly one-10th of the assembly responded by coming forward for prayer for future involvement in short- or long-term mission work.

Sieber is pastor of the Choele Choel congregation that hosted the mission festival held Oct. 14-15, 2006.

Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Argentina's Patagonia Mission Project supports four couples and four single women as mission workers. These 12 workers are recognized by Mennonite Mission Network as International Partnership Associates with Mennonite Mission Network.

While the daytime activity of the mission festival—with its abundance of food, conversation, camping, soccer and volleyball—resembles a church picnic more than an organizational business meeting, mission activity takes shape and flourishes, according to Linda Shelly, Mennonite Mission Network's director for Latin America.

Following the festival, a delegation from Illinois representing the Arm in Arm partnership with the Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Argentina and Mennonite Mission Network met with Argentine church leaders and representatives from the mission agency. During this meeting, Amaris and Juan Sieber accepted a call to return to mission work in Illinois for 10 months in 2007.

The Siebers had previously served in Illinois from July 2004 through February 2006.

The Patagonia Mission Project, formalized in the mid-1990s, carries out a twofold vision: developing new churches in Argentina's Patagonia region and renewing established churches in Patagonia and Illinois.

Renewal in Illinois congregations has opened the doors to opportunities for church planting within the state. The partnership has sponsored annual exchanges between Mennonites in Argentina and Illinois to build relationships and share resources.—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network*

Linda Shelly

Nearly one-10th of those attending the Argentine Evangelical Mennonite Church's mission festival received prayer for future involvement in mission.

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CALENDAR

The annual ***Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Youth Choir Festival Concert*** will be held March 11 at **Sauder Concert Hall**, Goshen College campus, Goshen, Ind.

Mennonite Health Assembly will be held March 29-April 1 in **Pittsburgh, Pa.**

WORKERS

Fox, Gerald W., was ordained as assistant pastor at Hinkletown Mennonite Church, Ephrata, Pa., on Nov. 19, 2006.

Zook, Steven R., was licensed as lead pastor at Green Terrace Mennonite Church, Wernersville, Pa., on Sept. 24, 2006.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bates, Ezekiel William, Dec. 8, 2006, to Matthew and Sarah Brady Bates, South Bend, Ind.

Bemiller, Tristan Lei, Dec. 15, 2006, to Lucas and Natasha Ramer Bemiller, Elkhart, Ind.

Blair, Kayleigh June, Dec. 12, 2006, to Matthew and Heidi L. Swann Blair, Manhattan, Kan.

Buller, Jacob Paul, Dec. 8, 2006, to Paul and RaNee Wieser Buller, York, Neb.

Doell, Samuel Greenwood, Oct. 28, 2006, to Jon and Heidi Greenwood Doell, Wichita, Kan.

Dorsing, Brooklyn Scott, Dec. 6, 2006, to Scott and Jacquie Kallenberger Dorsing, Royal City, Wash.

Eby, August Finn Martin, Sept. 13, 2006, to Donald G. Eby and Elizabeth Martin, Seattle, Wash.

Ediger, Noah Jase, Dec. 12, 2006, to Luke and Dawn Soloth Ediger, Omaha, Neb.

Franz, Aubrey Irene, Sept. 20, 2006, to Mike and Angela Reed Franz, Omaha, Neb.

Friesen, Cale Garen, Oct. 18, 2006, to Gibbon and Brooke Thieszen Friesen, Lincoln, Neb.

Friesen, Creighton James, Dec. 6, 2006, to Brad and Lori Peters Friesen, Henderson, Neb.

Friesen, Darren Dean, Oct. 27, 2006, to Nate and Amie Peters Friesen, Elwood, Neb.

Friesen, Gage Jackson, Nov. 15, 2006, to Jackson and Talia Glasser Friesen, Lincoln, Neb.

Hamm, Evan Daniel, Dec. 8, 2006, to Mark and Robin Gutteridge Hamm, Telford, Pa.

Havel, Mason Lee, Sept. 21, 2006, Jerry and Jackie Regier Havel, Grand Island, Neb.

Heathershaw, Grace Dasy, Dec. 18, 2006, to John and Julia Rowe Heathershaw, South Bend, Ind.

Hill, Tyler Grant, Nov. 2, 2006, to Justin and Ashley Bair Hill, Harrisonburg, Va.

Hinton, Kaylor Drew, Oct. 21, 2006, to Kevin and Annthie Kramer Hinton, Lincoln, Neb.

Kauffman, Carson James, Nov. 1, 2006, to Chad and Kristi Short Kauffman, Dayton, Ohio.

Kramer, Treygen Dean, Nov. 23, 2006, to Brent and Jennifer Bessler Kramer, Lincoln, Neb.

Lobe, Elias Gregory Awad, Dec. 25, 2006, to Greg and Tamara Awad Lobe, Kitchener, Ont.

Martin, Matthew Timothy, Nov. 11, 2006, to Alan and Christiane Haroun Martin, Waterloo, Ont.

Nafziger, Joshua William, Dec. 3, 2006, to Kevin and Sara Strunk Nafziger, Harrisonburg, Va.

Nafziger, Tessa Rose, Dec. 5, 2006, to Lincoln and Jen Varner Nafziger, Archbold, Ohio.

Nice, Cassia Kate, Nov. 13, 2006, to Kevin and Wendy Yoder Nice, Goshen, Ind.

Ott, Nicole Renae, Oct. 10, 2006, to Steve and Michele Epp Ott, Omaha, Neb.

Rhodes, Adam Adair, Dec. 14, 2006, to Jason and Laura Lehman Rhodes, Harrisonburg, Va.

Shumaker, Bianca Nicole, Feb. 1, 2002, received for adoption Sept. 18, by Michael and Carol Shumaker, Wayland, Iowa.

Shumaker, Darius Michael, Aug. 30, 2004, received for adoption Sept. 18, by Michael and Carol Shumaker, Wayland, Iowa.

Sommers, Madeline West, Nov. 18, 2006, to Todd and Gretchen Gusler Sommers, Indianapolis, Ind.

VanWagner, Rachel Heather, Dec. 24, 2006, to Mark and Darcey Wyse VanWagner, Denver, Colo.

Wilcox, Ethan Kirk, Dec. 5, 2006, to Stephen and Raquel Miller Wilcox, Harrisonburg, Va.

Yamanaka, Taira, Dec. 8, 2006, to Tomoki and Angela Wenger Yamanaka, Asahikawa City, Japan.

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MARRIAGES

Andreasen/Friesen: Jill Andreasen, Merna, Neb., and Zachary Friesen, Henderson, Neb., Sept. 30, 2006, at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Bautista/Neail: Joe Bautista, Pasadena, Calif., and Glory Neail, Pasadena, Dec. 16, 2006, at St. Elizabeth's of Hungary Catholic Church, Altadena, Calif.

Beck/Kauffman: Jeremy Beck, Archbold, Ohio, and Meagan Kauffman, Archbold, Nov. 4, 2006, at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Birky/Shirk: Jonathan Birky, Colorado Springs, Colo., and Emily Shirk, Harper, Kan., Oct. 28, 2006, at Beth-El Mennonite Church, Colorado Springs.

Boyd/Friesen: Bill Boyd, Lincoln, Neb., and Katie Friesen, Henderson, Neb., Sept. 2, 2006, at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Coaster/Goertzen: Heather Coaster, Fort Gratiot, Mich., and Wes Goertzen, Henderson, Neb., Sept. 23, 2006, in Fort Gratiot.

Compton/Martinez: Cassie Compton, Pasadena, Calif., and Joshua Martinez, Pasadena, Dec. 15, 2006, at Padua Hills Theatre, Claremont, Calif.

Deatsch/Miller: Betty Deatsch, Euclid, Ohio, and Mahlon Miller, Sarasota, Fla., Nov. 4, 2006, in Euclid.

Friesen/Klecan: Travis J. Friesen, Henderson, Neb., and Danielle Klecan, Odell, Neb., Sept. 30, 2006, at St. Peter's Catholic Church, Lincoln, Neb.

Friesen/Hofman: Vincent Friesen, Henderson, Neb., and Melissa Hofman, Sutton, Neb., Oct. 28, 2006, at Emmanuel Reformed Church, Sutton.

Harrison/Muhs: Dawn Harrison, Omaha, Neb., and Joe Muhs, Omaha, Sept. 16, 2006, at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb.

Hartman/Phebus: Amy Hartman, Wakarusa, Ind., and Jason Phebus, Goshen, Ind., Dec. 9, 2006, at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Leahy/Rufenacht: John Leahy, Lima, Ohio, and Cathy Rufenacht, Archbold, Ohio, Nov. 25, 2006, at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Melton/Quiring: Valorie Melton, Beloit, Kan., and Matthew Quiring, Henderson, Neb., Nov. 11, 2006, at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Menebroker/Siebert: Tina Menebroker, Lincoln, Neb., and Shane Siebert, Lincoln, Sept. 9, 2006, at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Lincoln.

Peifer/Witmer: Jeremy Peifer, Elizabethtown, Pa., and Jenna Witmer, Lancaster, Pa., Dec. 22, 2006, at Willow Street Mennonite Church, Willow Street, Pa.

DEATHS

Balzer, Raymond, 86, Whitewater, Kan., died Dec. 17, 2006. Spouse: Pauline Schroeder Balzer. Parents: Isaac and Emma Harms Balzer. Children: David, Kay Schroeder; four grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 20 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater.

Bontrager, Buetta Mae Wyse, 71, Hesston, Kan., died Dec. 22, 2006. Spouse: Marion G. Bontrager. Parents: Harold J. and Cora Nofziger Wyse. Children: Elizabeth Waite, Sonja Aumack, David; four grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 28 at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston.

Coffey, Madge, 94, Lyndhurst, Va., died Dec. 7, 2006, of kidney failure. Parents: John and Lucille Demastus Coffey. Funeral: Dec. 10 at Lynside Mennonite Church, Lyndhurst, Va.

Deiter, C. Kathryn Snavely, 83, Lititz, Pa., died Dec. 21, 2006. Spouse: Marvin W. Deiter (deceased). Parents: Amos and Alma K. Musser Snavely. Child: Karen A. Harnish; three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 28 at East Petersburg Mennonite Church, East Petersburg, Pa.

Derstine, Susanna Nyce, 95, Lansdale, Pa., died Dec. 23, 2006. Spouse: Raymond H. Derstine (deceased). Parents: Henry and Sally Freed Nyce. Children: Doris N. Landis, Kenneth N. Funeral: Dec. 28 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052.

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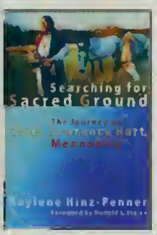

Searching for Sacred Ground: The Journey of Chief Lawrence Hart, Mennonite, Raylene Hinz-Penner. "Through the story of Lawrence Hart, Hinz-Penner bridges the Mennonite world and the world of the Cheyenne-Arapaho people." —*Robert Warrior (Osage)*. 206 p; $19.95

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Dirks, Ella Schultz, 102, Great Bend, Kan., died Oct. 18, 2006. Spouse: Harvey Dirks (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Elizabeth Unruh Schultz. Children: Beverly Prescott; seven grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 21 at Bergthal Mennonite Church, Pawnee Rock, Kan.

Garber, Elizabeth Miller, 82, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 1, 2006. Spouse: Maurice E. Garber. Parents: George Y. and Sylvia Jane Miller Miller. Children: Karen Troyer, Craig D., Joan Gingerich, Gretchen Weaver; 13 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 5 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Griffith, Oliver Grant, 82, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 6, 2006, of heart failure. Spouse: Joan Reedy Griffith. Parents: Eugene and Vivian Smith Griffith-Tampas. Children: Cameron, Barbara Griffith; two grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 11 at Hudson Lake Mennonite Church, New Carlisle, Ind.

Harder, DeLoris Niessen, 76, Butterfield, Minn., died Dec. 8, 2006, of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Raymond F. Harder. Parents: John J. and Anna Dick Niessen. Children: Curtis, Renee Herrig, Robyn Lundsten; six grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 12 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

Hostetler, Norma E., 84, West Liberty, Ohio, died Dec. 14, 2006. Parents: Stephen and Mamie Byler Hostetler. Funeral: Dec. 18 at Bethel Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Johnson, Lyle Jerome, 73, Sarasota, Fla., died Oct. 15, 2006, of renal failure. Spouse: Mabel Marlene Graber Johnson. Parents: Gilbert H. and Gladys Esther Tollefson Johnson. Children: Natalie Marilyn Shenk, Lyla Darlene Shenk, Linda Michelle Stamp, Jerry Lee York; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 19 at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Kauffman, Jr., Samuel S., 89, Ephrata, Pa., died Nov. 12, 2006, of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Mae Smoker Kauffman (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Nannie Zook Kauffman. Children: Glenn, Esther Bare, Joseph, Elvin, Rose White; 13 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 17 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Klippenstein, Elmer G., 86, Henderson, Neb., died Oct. 14, 2006. Spouse: Elvera Dalke Klippenstein. Parents: George and Anna Klippenstein. Children: James, Barbara Zellman; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Longenecker, Thelma B., 85, Lancaster, Pa., died Nov. 14, 2006. Funeral: Nov. 18 at Erisman Mennonite Church, Manheim, Pa.

Lovan, Hom, 80, Wayland, Iowa, died Nov. 27, 2006. Spouse: Yen Baccam Lovan. Parents: Yot and La Lovan. Children: Veng Tong Van, Chua, Vong Kavan, Moung Nguy En, Boun, Boundy; 14 grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 2 at Wayland Mennonite Church.

Mast, Elsie Burckhart, 89, Orrville, Ohio, died Dec. 7, 2006. Spouse: Leo Mast (deceased). Parents: Andrew M. and Frances Kreider Burckhart. Children: John, Elvin, Ken, Lois Kreider, Ruth Detweiler, Marilyn Schlabach; 19 grandchildren; 37 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 11 at Martins Mennonite Church, Orrville.

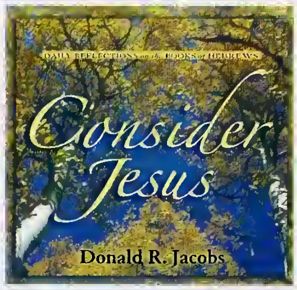
Mishler, Timothy B., 44, New Haven, Ind., died Dec. 9, 2006. Parents: Charles and Patricia Mishler. Funeral: Dec. 12 at North Leo Mennonite Church, Leo, Ind.

Nichols, Gianfrancea (Franca) Allegri, 78, Hartville, Ind., died Dec. 12, 2006. Spouse: Parley (Nick) Nichols. Parents: Petro and Maria Allegri. Children: Tony, Terry; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 16 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Rhodes, Robert Allen, 65, Dublin, Ga., died Aug. 3, 2006, of complications from chronic lymphocytic leukemia. Spouse: Rose Weaver Rhodes. Parents: Harley and Alta Wenger Rhodes. Children: Geoffrey Philip, Anthony Lawrence, Kathryn Elizabeth Rhodes-Reynolds; two grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 5 at Henry Memorial Presbyterian Church, Dublin.

Showalter, Donald E., 76, Kalona, Iowa, died Dec. 5, 2006. Spouse: Iva Hochstedler Showalter. Parents: Harry and Lala Bender Showalter. Children: Donald, Douglas, David, Dean, Dennis; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 9 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Herald Press: Books for the New Year



Consider Jesus: Daily Reflections on the Book of Hebrews

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—Jonathan J. Bonk, Overseas Ministries Study Center

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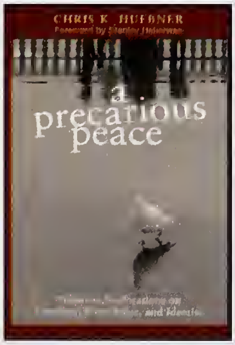

A Precarious Peace
Yoderian Explorations on Theology, Knowledge, and Identity

"In a powerful homage to his mentor, **Chris K. Huebner** shows the alternative path of self-criticism needed to liberate a world suffused by religious strategies intent on dominating. There can be no other way once we appreciate that knowledge is not ours to possess but only to seek—with others and through disagreement, as exemplified in the 'knowledge of Christ.'"

—David Burrell, University of Notre Dame

Paper, 242 pages, $18.99

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Stauffer, Brenda Sue Gingerich, 49, Akron, Pa., died Dec. 3, 2006, of cancer. Spouse: Ardell Stauffer. Parents: Aldine and Wilma Gingerich. Children: Maxwell, Graham. Funeral: Dec. 8 at Akron Mennonite Church.

Swartzentruber, Elizabeth Viola Christner, 90, Pigeon, Mich., died Dec. 12, 2006. Spouse: Vernon Swartzentruber (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Mary Boshart Christner. Children: Leon, Joyce Marmion, Elva Mast, Melva Barstow, Harold; 14 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 15 at Pigeon River Mennonite Church, Pigeon.

Wingard, Orie A., 92, Davidsville, Pa., died Nov. 26, 2006, of bronchitis and Parkinsons Disease. Spouse: Helen Niesner Wingard. Parents: Ammon and Hettie Kaufman Wingard. Child: David; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 29 at Kaufman Mennonite Church, Davidsville.

Yoder, Earl M., 79, Iowa City, Iowa, died Nov. 29, 2006. Spouse: Edna M. Bontrager Yoder. Parents: Mose W. and Barbara Bender Yoder. Children: Barb King, Deb Miller, Jeanne Auen; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 3 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

Yoder, Marcus Wayne, 64, Wellman, Iowa, died Nov. 29, 2006, of colon cancer. Spouse: Pearl Hunsberger Yoder. Parents: Lester and Carrie Slaubaugh Yoder. Children: Renae Yoder, Marlow, Karsten; three grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 4 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Yoder, Salome Mae, 98, Columbiana, Ohio, died Dec. 2, 2006. Spouse: Seth Yoder (deceased). Parents: Ira and Ella Weaver Horst. Children: Esther Van Pelt, Raymond. Funeral: Dec. 6 at Midway Mennonite Church, Columbiana.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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- **•1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794**

Actuarial Student

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) has an opening for an actuarial student to assist with various actuarial functions such as conducting experience studies, developing premiums, and calculating reserves. Qualified applicants will have a bachelor's degree in math, business, finance, or a related field; ability to solve mathematical and analytical problems and use computer resources effectively; and self-motivation to study actuarial syllabus materials.

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GOSHEN
COLLEGE

Frazer (Pa.) Mennonite Church, located 25 miles west of Philadelphia, is seeking a ***full-time pastor***. Frazer is a suburban congregation of 125 members that desires an experienced pastor who is gifted in preaching and teaching and who shares our vision for community outreach, peace and justice ministries, and active lay leadership. Please visit frazermennonite.org or contact Larry Massanari at 610-524-8332 or lmassanari@aol.com.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking qualified individuals for the following positions.

Faculty position in counselor education: Full-time (nine-month) continuing faculty position in the MA in Counseling program. Doctorate in counselor education or a closely related discipline required. Three years post-licensure clinical experience preferred. The new faculty member will teach master's level graduate courses in a CACREP accredited and AAPC approved program.

Faculty position in the conflict transformation program of the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding: Full-time, continuing faculty position in a graduate program in conflict transformation with a specialization in development and peacebuilding. Earned doctorate in conflict transformation or a related discipline required. Applicants should have teaching or training experience, along with field experience in international and/or community development. Complementary experience in religion and/or political science is desired. Student advising, university service and ongoing professional experience/scholarship expected.

For either position send letter of application, curriculum vitae, official transcripts, and three references to Beryl Brubaker, Provost, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, or email provost@emu.edu. Applicants may be asked to respond to questions specific to EMU's mission after the initial inquiry. Review begins immediately. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. Those who bring gender or ethnic diversity are encouraged to apply. Both positions begin fall 2007.

2007-08 C. Henry Smith Peace Lectureship call for proposals: The C. Henry Smith Trust Directors representing Bluffton University and Goshen College announce the 33rd annual **C. Henry Smith Peace Lecture.** The Peace Lectureship provides an opportunity for faculty members of Mennonite-related colleges to strengthen their resources for teaching peace. A committee will select a scholar to prepare and present a peace lecture—such as drama, story and visual art as well as a more formal lecture. Each lecture will be presented publicly at Bluffton University and Goshen College, and, if possible, lecturers are encouraged to present the lecture in churches and at other colleges. The lectureship should, whenever possible, highlight a distinctive Anabaptist peace perspective. The proposal deadline is Feb. 16. Applications and more information, including stipend details, may be found at www.bluffton.edu/academiclife/honors/chenry/.

Pastors' Family Weekend at **Spruce Lake Retreat**, March 16-18: Dr. Loren E. Swartzendruber, president of Eastern Mennonite University, and Jep Hostetler (who believes humor promotes health!), will lead this special retreat for pastors and their families. Call 800-822-7505. (Located in Pocono Mts., northeast Pennsylvania., www.sprucelake.org).

Care & Share Shoppes, Souderton, Pa., MCC Thrift Shop Network participant—***half-time furniture assistant manager,*** paid position. Applicant qualifications include management experience, organizational skills, retail experience, communication skills, ability to lift and move furniture. Contact Janet Landes at 215-723-0315 regarding this opportunity.

English conversation teachers needed. **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

The Hesston College Advantage:

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When I came to Hesston College, I was interested in film acting. I had done theatre productions during high school, and musical theatre through my dance company. I had a small speaking role in a TV movie by Lions Gate Films called *Bang, Bang, You're Dead*, shown in the U.S. on the Showtime channel.

Hesston gave me many helpful tools in the field of acting. With the help of amazing professors, the guidance of many wonderful mentors, and the support of a fantastic group of friends, I have learned more about life, God, and myself than I ever thought possible.

Jenna Grubaugh, class of 2005, Delta, British Columbia, Canada

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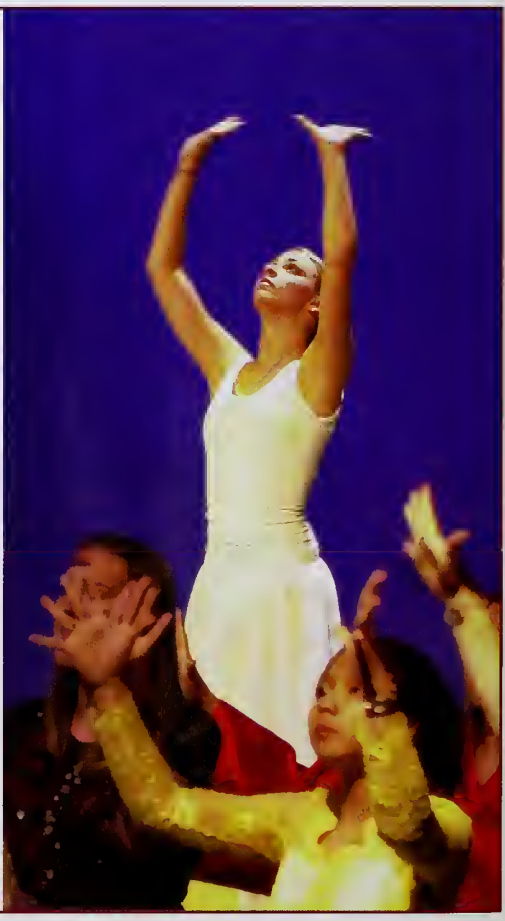

***Dean of students*—Rosedale Bible College**, an accredited two-year college in central Ohio operated by the Conservative Mennonite Conference (CMC), is seeking candidates for the position of dean of students, to begin in August 2007. The dean of students oversees the nonacademic elements of the student experience, including student activities, dorm life, community service, chapel programs, student nurture and spiritual development. The dean is also a member of the college's Administrative Council and will be expected to teach part-time. The ideal candidate will be a Christian who is in agreement with the CMC statements of faith, has proven leadership and ministry experience and possesses (or is willing to complete within two years) at least a master's degree in a field relevant to the college's curriculum. Inquiries, resumés and nominations should be sent by March 15 to: President Dan Ziegler, Rosedale Bible College, 2270 Rosedale Rd, Irwin, OH 43029 or to dziegler@rosedale.edu (740-857-1311).

Eastern Mennonite University invites applications for two faculty openings beginning Fall 2007.

Business: ***Full-time continuing faculty position in business***, with emphasis in marketing, information systems or management. Ph.D. or D.B.A. preferred; Ph.D. candidates considered. Master's degree and industry experience required; teaching experience ideal. Applicants must be willing and able to teach courses in marketing, management and/or information systems, with specific courses to be determined.

Education: ***Full-time continuing contract position in the education department.*** Earned doctorate in special education or cognate area and experience in P-12 educational programs for students with disabilities. The new faculty member will teach special education and general curriculum including assessment and classroom management courses in undergraduate and graduate programs.

Responsibilities for each position also include student advising, university service and ongoing scholarship. Salary and rank determined by education and experience.

EMU seeks faculty with evidence or promise of teaching excellence in a Christian, liberal arts environment, committed to ongoing scholarship, who are familiar with and supportive of Anabaptist/Mennonite Christian faith practices. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to Marie S. Morris, Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email to ugdean@emu.edu. Visit www.emu.edu online. Application review begins immediately. EMU reserves the right to fill the positions at any time or keep the positions open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity.

Eastern Mennonite School (K-12), located in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley in Harrisonburg, Va., is in the search process for two key positions: ***high school teacher—U.S. history and government***—beginning in Fall 2007 and ***director of development***. This person will nurture community relationships and provide supervisory leadership for the fund-raising, admissions, communications and marketing staff. Desirable candidates will value church relationships, are successful fund-raisers, enjoy youth, create positive first impressions, are energetic, optimistic, encouraging and articulate in spoken and written language. Candidates should be available to begin employment between January and July 2007. Successful candidates will share a passion for Anabaptist-Mennonite education in a Christ-centered academic environment. Please express interest to Paul Leaman, Principal, 801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; email leamanp@emhs.net; phone 540-432-4502; www.emhs.net. Eastern Mennonite School offers a competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with experience and is an equal opportunity employer.

Goshen College is inviting applications for a ***full-time tenure track position*** in the biology department. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Lithuania Christian College (LCC) is seeking an ***academic administrative assistant*** that will prepare for and follow-up with president's cabinet and department chair meetings, track strategic planning action plan items for monthly updates, collect and maintain institutional policies, coordinate various academic and institutional events including board meetings and graduation, and provide other support for the vice president of academics. Please visit our Web site at www.lcc.lt/opportunities for instructions on how to apply or email us at opportunities@lcc.lt.

Full-time pastor for urban church: **West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship** is a creative urban Anabaptist community seeking a full-time pastor. We are a 20-year-old congregation with an average attendance of 80, consisting primarily of young adults and families. Members are active in leading worship, preaching and all aspects of church ministries. For more information about the church go to www.wpmf.com; for more information about the pastor position contact Drick Boyd 610-341-4360.

Director for Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee: The Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA is looking for a dynamic leader to serve as full-time director beginning summer 2007. The director should have a passion for history and Mennonite stories, be a good communicator, have the desire and energy to make friends and continue strong relationships among the constituents of the Historical Committee, while communicating its mission. The director's duties include overseeing the work of the archives of Mennonite Church USA in Goshen, Ind., and North Newton, Kan. Some travel is necessary. Director may work out of either Goshen or North Newton office. Contact Shelley Buller, Mennonite Church USA Leadership (ShelleyB@MennoniteUSA.org or 866-866-2872) for an application and job description. Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership is an equal opportunity employer and encourages women and racial/ethnic people to apply for employment.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.20 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.

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The worth of human life

Gordon Houser

Some famous billionaires—such as Bill Gates and Warren Buffet—have been getting media attention in the past year or two for their philanthropy. Do we Mennonites, who preach generosity, justice and stewardship, have anything to learn from them about the worth of human life?

In an essay in the *New York Times* (Dec. 17, 2006), Princeton University professor Peter Singer, who is sometimes vilified by Christians (see our Dec. 5, 2006, issue, page 17), asks if our beliefs about the worth of human beings square with our giving patterns.

Gates, the founder of Microsoft, learned some years ago that in developing countries, millions of children die from diseases that have been virtually eliminated in the United States. He assumed that if there are vaccines and treatments that could save lives, governments would be doing everything possible to get them to the people who need them. Not so. He and his wife, Melinda, created the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, whose Web site says: "All lives—no matter where they are being led—have equal value."

But we are far from acting on that belief, Singer writes: "In the same world in which more than a billion people live at a level of affluence never previously known, roughly a billion other people struggle to survive on the purchasing power equivalent of less than one U.S. dollar per day. Most of the world's poorest people are undernourished, lack access to safe drinking water or even the most basic health services and cannot send their children to school. According to Unicef, more than 10 million children die every year—about 30,000 per day—from avoidable, poverty-related causes."

Last June, investor Buffet pledged $31 billion to the Gates Foundation and another $6 billion to other charitable foundations. Much as that is, though, it is not a large percentage of Buffet's income.

In his long essay (too long to summarize here), Singer looks at such ethical questions as why rich people give, if it does any good, whether we should praise them for what they give or criticize them for not giving more, and how our judgments of them reflect on our own way of living.

Singer uses the Millennium Development Goals, set by the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, as a guideline for overcoming global poverty. He then calculates the amount wealthy Americans—not to mention the rest of us—could comfortably give toward such goals.

He summarizes his point thus: "For more than 30 years, I've been reading, writing and teaching about the ethical issue posed by the juxtaposition, on our planet, of great abundance and life-threatening poverty. Yet it was not until, in preparing this article, I calculated how much America's Top 10 percent of income earners actually make that I fully understood how easy it would be for the world's rich to eliminate, or virtually eliminate, global poverty. (It has actually become much easier over the last 30 years, as the rich have grown significantly richer.)"

Neither he nor most of us expect the wealthiest 10 percent to practice such giving. But the problems in our world can be addressed realistically, with the appropriate willingness to do so—and the belief that each human life is equally worth saving.

Where does that leave us who believe we are called to be generous in response to a generous God? Certainly we see stewardship as more than just giving money to reduce global poverty. But surely it includes that. We may have something to learn from the Gates and Buffets of the world.

FILMS

Blood Diamond (R) is set mostly in Sierra Leone in 1999, when rebels roam through villages, killing women and taking young boys to make them soldiers. The film wants people to know that the purchase of some rough diamonds contributes to the killing of many innocent people. It tells the story of Solomon, who tries to get his captured son back, of a white African arms merchant who wants to get the large diamond Solomon found, and of an American journalist who wants to expose the unjust diamond trade. While a bit too contrived, it raises questions about evil and goodness.

DVDS

Iraq for Sale looks at the use of private contractors in Iraq and shows the waste of money and lives this leads to. The documentary interviews family members of U.S. civilian workers who died there from their company's neglect, former workers and various experts. Haliburton alone has overcharged the U.S. government (at taxpayers' expense) more than $1.5 billion. Exorbitant profit outweighs concern for human welfare.

BOOKS

Jesus Today: A Spirituality of Radical Freedom by Albert Nolan (Orbis Books, 2006, $16) and **Mind the Light: Learning to See with Spiritual Eyes** by J. Brent Bill (Paraclete Press, 2006, $14.95) are two distinctive yet complementary approaches to spirituality. Nolan, whose classic *Jesus Before Christianity* stressed the political context of Jesus' mission, here focuses on Jesus' own spirituality and how that is relevant today. He looks at the signs of our times, Jesus' spirituality, personal transformation and oneness with God and all creation. Bill, a Friends minister, reflects on light in all its manifestations and how through attention and love we can see the presence of God. Throughout the book are "illuminating moments," practices to help us experience light in new ways.

Postmodernism 101: A First Course for the Curious Christian by Heath White (Brazos Press, 2006, $17.99) is a good introduction to how we have moved from a premodern to a modern to a postmodern world. In such a short book, White paints in broad brushstrokes. This book is a good place to begin—but not to end—in understanding postmodernism.

Willie Mae Thomas, MMA advocate and deacon of Hopewell Mennonite Church in Reading, Pa.

Mennonite Church USA

The real gift is in the giving.

Just ask Willie Mae Thomas, who says, "It's been a blessing to work with street ministries." The first female deacon of her congregation and an MMA advocate, Willie Mae is an excellent resource for people within her congregation and community.

Like other Mennonite Church USA congregations, Hopewell Mennonite Church offers countless ministry opportunities – from one-on-one ministries like hospital visitations and prisoner counseling to large-scale efforts like a community-wide youth ministry and food bank, a program partnered by Mennonite Mission Network.

Willie Mae knows involvement is the key to being part of God's plan. "Everyone has a gift," she says. "It's up to us to ask God, 'Where do you want me to be – and what do you want me to do?' " That faith is why Mennonite Church USA is joyfully following Jesus into the world – trusting that he will equip us to do his work in it.

Joyfully following Jesus *We* are Mennonite Church USA www.MennoniteUSA.org

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Everett J. Thomas

Help with school choice

Ten U.S. states, Puerto Rico and Ontario have Mennonite high schools. The presence of these schools introduces tough choices for some families and can be a wedge in congregational life when other members strongly support public education. Nevertheless, we need these church schools—as well as elementary and middle schools. Some children thrive in public schools, but others need the spiritual nurture and academic intimacy of church schools long before college.

At the end of my junior year in high school, I wanted to transfer to Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School for my senior year. Since our high school had few Mennonite students or teachers, it seemed wonderful to have at least one year where my classmates would be Mennonite and could understand conscientious objection during the Vietnam War. I even dreamed about it in my sleep.

But when I mentioned something to my parents, they did not like the idea. As I recall, my mother said Christians needed to be salt and light in the world—not gathered together off to the side in a pile and isolated from the world.

I had an excellent senior year at Lampeter-Strasburg (Pa.) High School and a good experience at Millersville (Pa.) State University during my first year of college. But when I transferred to Goshen (Ind.) College the second year, I experienced that dream deferred. I so enjoyed being in a church school that I decided to teach in the Mennonite high school in Goshen after graduation. I became an advocate for church schools at all levels and made sure our children attended them for high school and college.

Some children thrive in public schools, but others need the spiritual nurture and academic intimacy of church schools.

But the large congregation we attend has many administrators and teachers—including my wife, Barbara—who are committed to Goshen's public school system.

I am inspired by their commitment to public school students, especially with the demographic changes occurring in Goshen. Primarily because of our industrial base, we have many factory workers whose family income makes their children eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. Furthermore, many of these workers are undocumented immigrants from Mexico willing to work at factory jobs for wages others will not.

As in many other small towns, our public school system is the single most important public institution for addressing the needs of these children. I respect and applaud the Mennonite teachers and administrators who give sacrificially to make the public school system a place of healing and hope for children who might be alienated in other school systems.

Does that mean all Mennonite youth should stay in public schools instead of Bethany Christian School with its grades six through 12?

No. The choice parents make for their children is about more than whether their children can stabilize a changing public school or influence the culture that emerges from each student generation. It is also about nurturing the tender spiritual faith sprouting during those adolescent years. It is about having winsome teachers who articulate Anabaptist values in a history class or critique American literature with Mennonite values in an English class. It is about regular Bible classes that help our children understand radical discipleship. It is about chapel services where youth grow comfortable worshiping with their friends and hearing the faith stories of their teachers.

Some of our children may need this nurture when they are 10 years old. Some when they are 15. Some may not need this nurture until they reach college age. Wisdom about this choice is what parents most need from their congregations.

If the faith of our children is what we care most about, we must create congregational cultures that devalue secondary considerations—like which school has the best athletic teams or the most spectacular extracurricular activities.

Church schools are a critical resource for Mennonite Church USA, and we must not let outside values divert us from discerning how best to use them to form faith in our children.—*ejt*

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

Note: The next issue of *The Mennonite* will be dated Feb. 6, 2007.

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The Mennonite

www.TheMennonite.org

February 6, 2007

a look in the mirror

New profile of Mennonite Church USA

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Protecting our children from the church

Anne Stuckey is associate pastor at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio.

I remember when we carried our daughter to the front of the church at West Union Mennonite Church in Parnell, Iowa, and promised to be loving parents to her and to bring her up in the way of Christ, teaching her to love her neighbor as herself, just as Christ taught us. I was moved by the promises the congregation made to this infant, that they would love her and be Christ's light to her as she grew into the woman God called her to be. It was a comfort to know that as parents we were not the only ones responsible to teach her, that the community of faith also bore the responsibility of molding this child. In the years that followed, this congregation showed her Christ's love through Sunday school teachers and "aunts and uncles" in Christ who reveled in her unique gifts. And how she blossomed under such warmth!

I realize not all children are given the blessing of safety in the church that our daughter experienced. Some are violated in ways we don't even want to admit could occur in Christ's body. So we put congregational sexual safety policies in place, hoping to keep our children from that kind of harm. And now that this child of mine is an adult, I am thankful the church has been a warm, welcoming place for her to grow. That is the kind of experience that we want for all our children throughout their lifetime in the broader church we love.

However, now that our daughter is serving in a Mennonite church office, it hurts me when I hear that a person in the broader Mennonite church has been able to say hurtful things to her. At what point did it become accepted in the church for us to attack each other personally?

And I know this isn't an isolated incident. When I was Director of Ministerial Services and maintained the list of current available pastoral candidates for congregations, I also had a Mennonite pastor threaten me and my children with harm if I didn't publish his availability. Somehow, it is not so hard for me to accept that kind of hurt for myself because I know it will not jeopardize my love of the church. But that is not a guarantee I can make for my children.

What happens to the Christ light that we are to shine for others when we become adults?

The local congregation is called to be the hospital where God's healing can flow to his children. That identifies most of us as broken and in need of healing. But that does not give us permission to act in ways that are decidedly not Christlike.

We harm each other with judgmental decisions and cutting words. Exclusivity and a refusal to listen to alternative viewpoints narrow the circle of people to which we are willing to give our love. Our individual needs often take precedence over the good of the whole community and certainly over the good of any single brother or sister in the church. So if we can't trust the church to care about and love our children, whom can we trust?

Laban and Jacob knew they had the power to hurt each other as well. God led them to erect a pillar and heap of stones as a boundary between them. Laban said to Jacob, "This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm" (Genesis 31:52). Today the model of Christ's love is the barrier we cannot cross to harm another.

A Mennonite Central Committee poster reads, "A modest proposal for peace: let the Christians of the world agree that they will not kill each other." May we amend this to say, "A modest proposal for health in the church: let the Christians of the Mennonite Church agree that they will not harm each other with words."

TheMennonite

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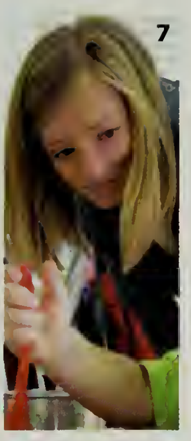

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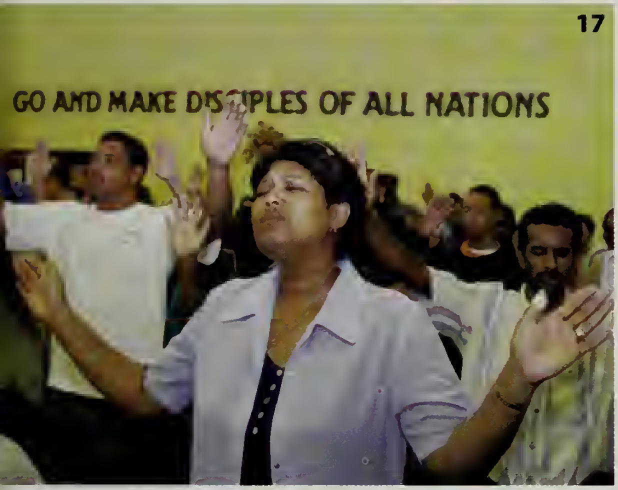
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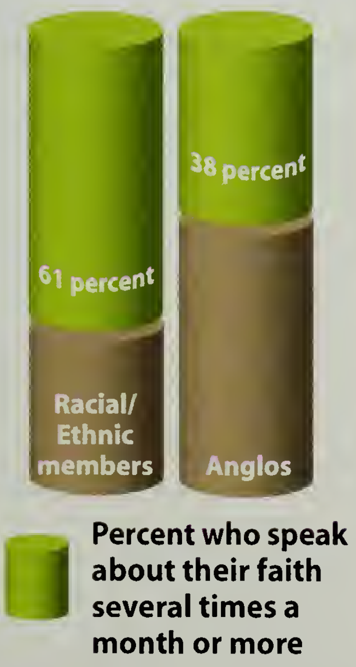

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Two routes to pacifism

Thank you for the thought-provoking articles on pacifism and politics in the Jan. 2 issue. James Halteman's "Two Routes to a Pacifist Position" especially stimulated my thinking. I greatly appreciate his affirmation of pacifism as a "radical calling." However, I fear he caricatures what he calls the "dominant gene" view. He seems to reduce it to a naive hope that if we are nice to others, then everyone will in turn be nice back.

However, there is another way to articulate a belief in "pacifism as a serious option for everyone to follow." Jesus as God's Son reveals the true nature of the universe and the normative expectation of God for all human beings when he taught and embodied love for all people, including enemies. God's will is for the pacifist witness of God's people to bless all the families of the earth (Genesis 12) and to foster healing for the nations (Revelation 21-22). The human calling to nonviolence comes directly from our Creator and reflects how we each have been created to live. In light of this calling, it is fully consistent with "Christ's way of peace" to seek an end to violence wherever it happens.—*Ted Grimsrud, Harrisonburg, Va.*

In the Jan. 2 issue, the treatment of our attitude and witness to the political order was commendable indeed. Amid its excellent points, two themes especially stand out. The first is especially refreshing because it is so often lost in current Mennonite discussions. That theme is that, in the end, we do have to choose, as James Halteman put it well, between "the way of the cross and the ways of the world [because] there are really two kingdoms that are relevant in this world." The second was that such a "two-kingdom" understanding of Jesus' teachings does not imply a gospel with any less of a message for human politics and systems or, worse, one that says Jesus' followers should bless violence, injustice and arrogance perpetrated by governments on grounds that such evils are necessary or even God-ordained in the worldly realm.

Surely there is a close connection between Anabaptists' and Mennonites' historic "two-kingdom" understanding and their desire to follow Jesus thoroughly. But "two-kingdom" thought comes in various versions.

If the four main articles of your January issue have one overriding message, it is that we who know we must choose between "the way of the cross and the ways of the world" can indeed proclaim a gospel that calls secular authorities to pursue humility, nonretaliation, justice and freedom from fear and violence. Thank you and your authors for making that message clear.—*Theron F. Schlabach, Goshen, Ind.*

In his article "Two Routes to a Pacifist Position," Jim Halteman suggests Christian pacifists use the states' own laws and guidelines on just war to push for some measure of justice in a time of war. Here is a concrete example of how to do that. I was training with Christian Peacemaker Teams in July 2006, during which time the Lebanon-Israeli war and the Israeli military offensive on Palestine was well under way. Our training group decided on a public action: marching from the Israeli consulate to the Dirksen Federal building in downtown Chicago singing, praying and handing out leaflets along the way.

At the federal building, six of us proceeded into the building to speak with Senator Dick Durbin, who sat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, having access to U.S. funds distributed to Israel in a time of war. Our group wanted to press him on the fact that the Arms Export Control Act restricts the use of U.S. weapons to legitimate self-defense and internal policing. Durbin was out of the office, and his staff turned down our request to stay until we received notice from Durbin acknowledging our request. Because lives were hanging in the balance, we chose to stay in the senator's office praying and reading the names of civilians killed since the start of the war. Homeland Security arrested us and handed us over to the Chicago police, who then charged us with trespassing on federal property.

This example shows how to use the states' own just war guidelines to make an appeal on their own moral grounds to spare civilians the evils of war. However, I do not believe Halteman is advocating that Mennonites take up the just-war theory and adopt it in our churches.—*Jason Arndt, Gary, Ind.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Conrad Kanagy (page 8) asks what it means to be a Mennonite Church USA member. In three exclusive articles he reports on findings from the Mennonite Member Profile 2006. This scientific study gives a better grasp of who we are and how we practice our beliefs. Conrad gives particular attention to findings about Mennonite ministers (page 12) and racial/ethnic Mennonites (page 15). He draws important lessons about what shapes pastors. He also looks at the opportunities and challenges we face from the growing number of racial/ethnic members and congregations in Mennonite Church USA. In his editorial (page 32), Everett J. Thomas addresses the finding that we are not highly committed to area conferences. He also reports (page 20) that this is a concern of Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board.—*Associate Editor*

Articles model loving conversation
I welcomed the quartet of articles in the Jan. 2 issue on the theme of pacifism and political involvement. At a time when the political discourse in many of our congregations mimics the polarization and hostility of our larger culture, we need to connect with the best reasoning in our tradition and practice healthy patterns of communication. The various shades of opinion on an Anabaptist approach to politics are fairly and articulately stated in these essays. By giving voice to the variety of reasoned approaches among us, you have modeled the first stages of loving conversation.—*David Greiser, Hesston, Kan.*

Christian Zionism
In the Dec. 19, 2006, editorial ("Shattering the Silent Night"), Everett Thomas' brush was too wide in painting Christian Zionism as extremism that wants to hasten Armageddon. Armageddon will come before we are ready for it. True Christian Zionism is not a threat to anybody but seeks to be a blessing. Christian Zionists have given millions of dollars of aid and care to all the population groups in the land, not only to Jews. And the support of these Zionist organizations in Israel comes from believers in many nations, not just the United States. Why not ask the denominational leaders in Jerusalem to focus on developing relationships between believers—including the Zionist organizations they object to—rather than trying to get rid of them? If they want to get rid of Zionism, let them begin with Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel for starters. —*William Wickey, Burr Oak, Mich.*

Everett Thomas' editorial "Shattering the Silent Night" was wonderfully said. But Thomas might feel the pain for taking on the "Christian Zionists" in our midst. He will hear from our fundamentalists in response to this editorial.—*Jim Compton-Schmidt, Fresno, Calif.*

Church helps Mennonite school students
In "Strengthening the Church" (Jan. 16), Loren Swartzendruber points out that many students from our Mennonite churches attend non-Mennonite colleges and universities. He says the church needs graduates of Mennonite schools.

While the Mennonite church and Mennonite institutions of higher learning lament this fact, there are positive means by which this student drain can be mitigated. A number of years ago, the Mennonite Church of Normal (Ill.) embarked on a program called Student Mutual Aid Program—a nonbudgeted item in the church. Each college-bound student is offered expenses of full tuition, minus scholarships and grants, for four years at a Mennonite college. The cost for the 2006-2007 school year is $94,274, contributed by church members concerned about our students entering Mennonite schools. This year eight students are in Mennonite colleges and two at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. Over the years this program has served nearly 115 students.—*John C. Stutzman, Normal, Ill.*

Contributing to education fund
Thanks for Anna Groff's ongoing contributions to *The Mennonite*. I noticed the article she wrote in the Jan. 16 issue ("The Strength of Diversity Is Needed"). Thanks for raising awareness about the need for contributions to the Racial/Ethnic Leadership Education (RELE) fund. After reading the article, I was wondering to whom I would direct funds? To which organization would our giving be of the most help, as it now stands? Or do we need to wait for a restructuring?—*Rodney Nafziger, Lancaster, Pa.*

Editor's note: Contributions can be sent to Mennonite Education Agency, 63846 C.R. 35, Goshen, IN 46528-9621. Checks should designate that the contribution is for the RELE fund.

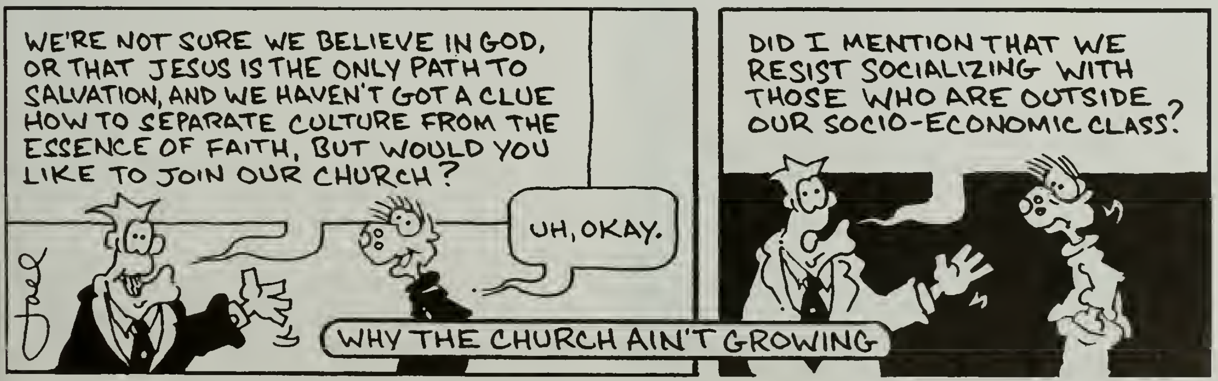
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Compared with 10 years ago, Mennonite Church USA members are: (92 votes)

- ○ More conservative (24%)
- ○ More liberal (46%)
- ○ I wasn't a member 10 years ago (13%)
- ○ Not sure (17%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


WE'RE NOT SURE WE BELIEVE IN GOD, OR THAT JESUS IS THE ONLY PATH TO SALVATION, AND WE HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE HOW TO SEPARATE CULTURE FROM THE ESSENCE OF FAITH, BUT WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN OUR CHURCH?
UH, OKAY.
DID I MENTION THAT WE RESIST SOCIALIZING WITH THOSE WHO ARE OUTSIDE OUR SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS?
WHY THE CHURCH AIN'T GROWING
Joel

IN BRIEF

Angustia new MVS director

Moises Angustia, a volunteer co-pastor and youth leader, assumed leadership of Mennonite Voluntary Service Feb. 1, when Scott Siemens, who served as MVS director for five years, transitioned to other work. He is a member of United Revival Mennonite Church, Brooklyn, N.Y., and serves as youth representative to Iglesia Menonita Hispana (Hispanic Mennonite Church). MVS provides opportunities for adults of all ages to serve Christ in more than 20 communities across the United States. —*Mennonite Mission Network*

Choice Books sells 5 million in 2006

Choice Books, an inter-Anabaptist book evangelism ministry, reached another million book milestone and set a new annual sales record by purchasing/selling 5,071,579 books in 2006, making 2006 the 21st consecutive year of sales growth. For more information, visit www.choicebooks.org.—*Choice Books*

Danisa Ndlovu pleads for help in Zimbabwe

STRASBOURG, France—"The challenges facing our nation do not seem to want to go away," Danisa Ndlovu, Bishop of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe, told Mennonite World Conference (MWC) officers and executive staff at a California meeting last month. "Each day seems to bring more hardships."

Ndlovu is asking the MWC global family to continue to pray for his country and his church and to make solidarity visits to Zimbabwe. He also requested financial assistance for the BICC Peace Committee and MWC's help in creating a peace, social justice and ethics desk to serve Zimbabwe and other African countries.

MWC officers at the California meeting agreed to send a "koinonia team" to visit Zimbabwe in 2007 to build community through presence, prayer and encouragement. Volunteers for the team will be considered along with selected participants.

Ndlovu, vice president and president-elect of MWC, described increasingly devastating political, economic and social conditions. To address the situation, three major Christian church groups in Zimbabwe—the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, of which the BICC is a member, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference—are calling for dialogue among all sectors of Zimbabweans inside and outside the country to construct a national vision for future governance in the country.

The church groups have jointly produced a discussion document, "The Zimbabwe We Want: Towards a National Vision for Zimbabwe," which the church groups presented to President Robert Mugabe. They are hoping all stakeholders, not only churches, will take ownership of the process.

Under Mugabe's leadership the country has spun into sharp decline. Professional people continue to leave. The economic situation fuels corruption, unemployment is still at 80 percent, inflation continues at 1,200 percent, the highest in the world, and life expectancy is now about 38 years.

Health delivery is compromised. Hospitals have few if any drugs. The sick are sometimes being asked to hunt for medical prescriptions in the market, then take the medicine to the hospital for their treatment. Although the rate of HIV/AIDS infections is decreasing, the pandemic continues, with an increasing number of orphans as a result.

Many of the thousands of people made homeless by the 2005 "Restore Order/Clean Up" still have no homes. The promised new homes have mostly gone to government employees and friends. New "clean-up" operations have left more people homeless. Ndlovu said that on a December 2006 trip to Harare, the capital city, he saw people "who had piled their belongings, some along the road, praying for transport," their huts smoldering or in flames. "We are praying that this cup of suffering will go away," he said.—*Ferne Burkhardt*

Jim Bishop

Pioneer women broadcasters honored

Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., honored Ella May Miller (left) and Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus, who were likely the first in the Mennonite Church to have their own syndicated radio broadcast, called "Heart to Heart."—*Eastern Mennonite Seminary*

Music, worship program celebrates 20 years

MT. PLEASANT, Pa.—More than 200 people gathered Jan. 5-7 to celebrate the 20th annual Music and Worship Leaders retreat at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant. Ysaye Maria Barnwell, composer, teacher and performer in the renowned music ensemble Sweet Honey in the Rock, led participants in spirituals and gospel music from the African American tradition.

"Gospel music did not begin until the 20th century," said Barnwell. While influenced by spirituals, gospel music is a unique musical form. Spirituals are an expression of a community rooted in African religious tradition, while "gospel music is about Jesus." According to Barnwell, spirituals were reclaimed during the Civil Rights movement.

Pastor Leonard Dow of Oxford Circle Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, spoke to participants on the importance of church unity and multicultural worship. Dow's congregation is a racially and ethnically diverse congregation.

Participants, Laurelville staff and program leadership team members honored Ken Nafziger for his 20 years of service to the Mennonite church through the Music and Worship Leaders program.

Workshops on music, drama, multicultural worship and 20-year memories were led by Marilyn Houser Hamm and Michael Bishop, Jeff Raught, Leonard Dow and Anne Hess, and Nafziger and Marlene Kropf, respectively.

Mark Wasser

ttle extra love

vice Adventure participant Liz Nussbaum gives children at wing Together Preschool in Raleigh, N.C., a little extra love. st of the preschoolers come from low-income families who in Raleigh's Walnut Terrace housing project. Nussbaum, of lege Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., assists teacher Kathy s in helping preschoolers build the skills they need to be dy for kindergarten.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Rosemary Bray McNatt, a preacher from New York City, will be the featured guest for the 2008 program, focusing on preaching through music and worship to be held Jan. 4-6, 2008.—*Laurelville Mennonite Church Center*

Iraqi peace worker killed in Baghdad

HARRISONBURG, Va.—An Iraqi-Muslim advocate for peace and reconciliation who received support from Christian organizations for his work in trauma-healing has been killed.

Alharith Abdulhameed Hassan, 56-year-old professor of psychiatry at the University of Baghdad, was shot while traveling to work on Dec. 6, 2006, according to an email sent last month by his bereaved widow, Maysa Hussam Jaber, to friends at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU).

Both Alharith and Maysa attended trainings under EMU's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding in Harrisonburg in the summer of 2004. They were selected and sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee, with additional support from Church World Service.—*EMU*

Hannah Taylor, 11, fights homelessness

WINNIPEG—Antihomelessness activist Hannah Taylor, 11, told students and staff at a Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) chapel Jan. 22: "If we never give up and care enough for each other, we can do anything."

When you see a homeless person, "don't be afraid of them, be kind to them," she said.

Hannah Taylor

The young Winnipegger's journey of helping homeless people across Canada began when she was 5 years old and saw someone eating out of garbage can.

"I was very sad and felt sick about it," she said. "I asked my mom why he had to do that. She said it was because he was homeless."

Hannah turned that experience into a classroom project, then later made "Ladybug" jars—glass jars spray painted red with black dots—to collect spare change. That was the start of the Ladybug Foundation, which has raised over $500,000 for Canadian charities that help homeless people.

Members of the CMU community are doing their part to help Hannah help homeless people; Ladybug jars have been placed around the campus so students, staff and visitors can donate their spare change.—*Canadian Mennonite University*

Pastor organizes class on pastoral ministry

ELKHART, Ind.—A miniterm class at Central Christian High School, Kidron, Ohio, created an opportunity for four high school students to explore pastoral ministry during the first two weeks of January.

Four students at Central Christian—Andrew Eades, Jonathan Hershberger, Dustin Linder and Annali Murray—participated in a nine-day class designed by Terry Shue, pastor of Kidron Mennonite Church.

On four mornings, local pastors taught on spiritual gifts, preaching, pastoral care and discerning a call to ministry. In the afternoons, each student worked alongside one of the pastors. Later the group visited Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart.—*AMBS*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

The wages of war

No one can predict the long-term consequences of the Iraq War, but only last summer did the U.S. government stop collecting a 3 percent tax on long-distance telephone calls that was begun in 1898 to help pay for the Spanish-American War—a war that lasted only several months.—*The Christian Century*

Fever chart

U.S. government climate experts reported Jan. 9 that 2006 was the warmest year on record for the 48 contiguous states, pairing a summer heat wave with a mild winter—in some places daffodils bloomed out of season and bears forgot to hibernate. The average annual temperature in the 48 states last year was 2.2 degrees warmer than the mean temperature for the 20th century.—*Wichita Eagle*

Mercenaries in Iraq

Private military contractors have reportedly fired indiscriminately on Iraqi civilians hundreds of times throughout the U.S. occupation, yet none has been prosecuted, according to "Corporate Mercenaries," a report released last October by the U.K.-based organization War on Want. The report says that lack of government accountability has led employees of private military contractors—the second largest occupying force in Iraq—to ignore human rights. —*Sojourners*

A landscape of change

A look at members of Mennonite Church USA

by Conrad L. Kanagy

What does it mean to be Mennonite in the 21st century? How have perceptions of Anabaptist identity changed over time? The frequency with which these questions arise among Mennonites suggests anxiety and uncertainty about possible answers. But addressing these questions is more challenging than in the past. Among other factors, the transformation of two Mennonite denominations with different cultural and historical identities, the continued assimilation of Mennonites into the larger American culture and the growth of racial/ethnic Mennonite congregations challenge efforts that offer quick and easy answers.

In 1972, J. Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder launched Church Member Profile I, a comprehensive survey of five Anabaptist denominations in North America. Joined by Leo Driedger, they conducted a follow-up study in 1989. In 2006, the Young Center of Elizabethtown College conducted a third denominational profile. The most comprehensive survey ever of Mennonites in the United States, this study included a representative sample of members in 120 congregations of Mennonite Church USA, a special sample of racial/ethnic members, a sample of Mennonite ministers and a congregational profile of participating congregations.

This article offers a summary of findings from Mennonite Member Profile 2006. It provides a "20,000-foot" view of the current Mennonite landscape in the United States as well as shifts in that landscape over the past three decades.

Mennonite identity: When Mennonites were asked to identify the two religious words that best described them, two-thirds chose "Mennonite" or "Anabaptist." The remaining third chose other terms, including spiritual, evangelical, charismatic and Pentecostal. Pastors were more likely than members to identify themselves as Anabaptist or Mennonite, with 84 percent of them doing so. Among racial/ethnic members, 41 percent described themselves by these words.

Congregational and denominational loyalty: The findings of Mennonite Member Profile 2006 generally support what sociologists know about American Christians as a whole—congregations are more important to members than are denominations and area conferences. Among members of Mennonite Church USA, 34 percent say they are "very strongly" committed to the denomination and 12 percent to their area conference. In comparison, 58 percent are "very strongly" committed to their local congregation.

At the same time, more members today (48 percent) than in 1972 (25 percent) say they will always want to remain a member of their denomination. While the current level of denominational loyalty today is slightly lower than for Conservative Protestants (52 percent) in the United States, it is higher than among Mainline Protestants (37 percent), according to *The Truth About Conservative Christians* by Andrew Greeley and Michael Hout (University of Chicago Press, 2006).

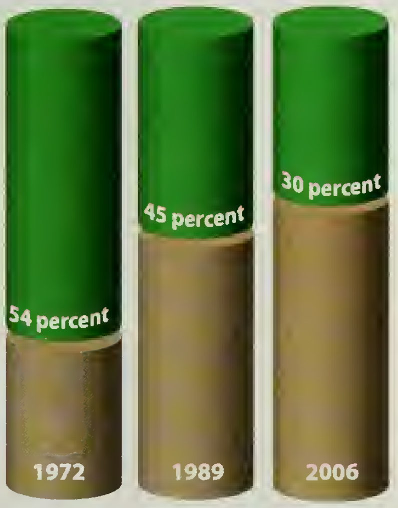
A major shift among Mennonites over the past three decades has been the increase in members from other denominations.

More new members: A major shift among Mennonites over the past three decades has been the increase in members from other denominations. We see this at several different levels:

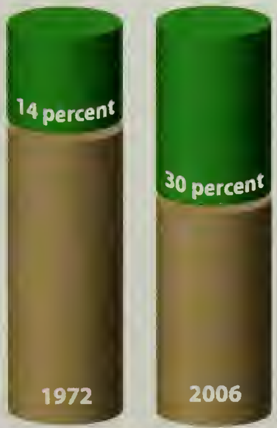
- The percent of "noncradle" Mennonites—neither parent being Mennonite—has risen since 1972 from 17 percent to 26 percent.
- The percent of Mennonites who have been members in other denominations (including noncradle Mennonites) has increased from 14 percent in 1972 to 30 percent today.
- The percent of Mennonite members who married a spouse from another denomination has risen from 25 percent in 1972 to 39 percent in 2006.

Without a major influx of younger people, questions of Anabaptist identity will take a lower profile to the question of mere survival.

Rapidly aging membership: The average age of Mennonites today is 54 years, five years older than in 1989. More important, however, is the rapidly shifting age distribution of Mennonites. In 1972, 54 percent of Mennonites were under age 45—within childbearing age. This number declined to 45 percent in 1989 and is only 30 percent today. This change has been more extreme for Mennonites than even for Mainline Protestant denominations, which Greeley and Hout describe as "literally dying out" because of similar changes in their age distribution. Among Mainline Protestant denominations, 42 percent of members are under 45 years of age, compared with 52 percent of Conservative Protestants.



🟩 **Decrease in Mennonites under age 45**



🟩 **Increase in members from "other than Mennonite" backgrounds**

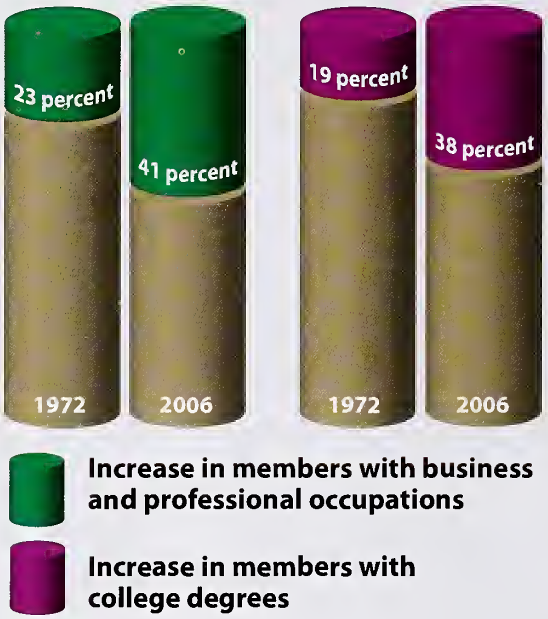
Growing racial/ethnic congregations: The growth of racial/ethnic congregations is changing the face of Mennonite Church USA. The term racial/ethnic is a self-designation by Mennonite Church USA groups with members that include those who are

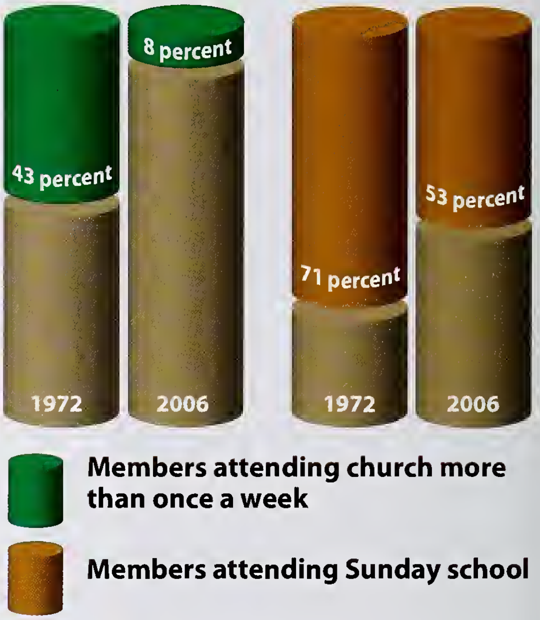
Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

The growth of racial/ethnic congregations is changing the face of Mennonite Church USA.

African-American, Latino/Hispanic, Native American, Asian and "other than Anglo." In the past five years, 25 percent of the denomination's new members have been racial/ethnic, compared with just 6 percent among those members who entered the denomination more than five years ago.

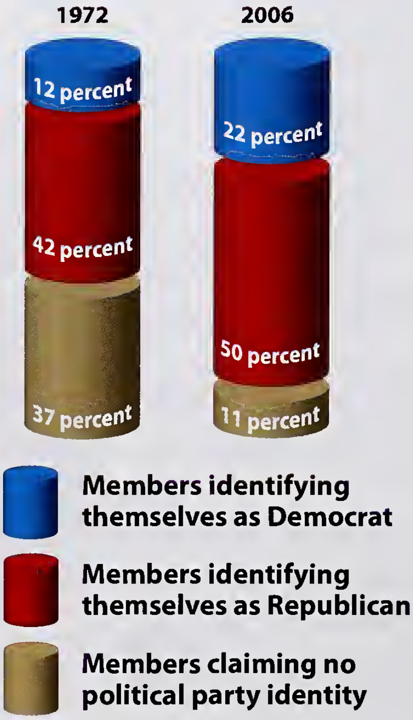




Increased assimilation: In 1972, 36 percent of Mennonites lived on a farm, compared with 12 percent today. While almost twice as many Mennonites reside in large cities (250,000 or more residents) today as in 1972, this number still accounts for less than 10 percent of all Mennonites.

In their work, more Mennonites hold business and professional occupations compared with three decades ago—41 percent today and 23 percent in 1972. At the same time, twice as many Mennonites have college degrees today (38 percent) as in 1972 (19 percent).

Greater political identification: In 1972, 37 percent of Mennonites claimed no political party identity, compared with only 11 percent today. Increases have occurred for both Republicans and Democrats. In 1972, 42 percent of Mennonites identified themselves as Republicans, compared with 50 percent in 2006. During this same period the proportion of Democrats has nearly doubled, from 12 percent to 22 percent. But in the last presidential election, two-thirds of Mennonites who voted did so for George W. Bush.



Changing church attendance: While the percent of Mennonites who regularly attend church has remained about the same since 1972, church attendance for Mennonites has become largely a "once a week" event, with the percent who attend more than once a week dropping from 43 percent in 1972 to 8 percent today. In addition, the proportion who attend Sunday school has declined from 71 percent in 1972 to 53 percent today.

Conclusion: These early findings of Mennonite Member Profile 2006 have important implications for Mennonite identity as well as the future of Mennonite Church USA. Among these implications are both challenges and opportunities:

- The growth of members from other than Mennonite backgrounds is good news for a denomination interested in becoming more missional—calling all people to a primary allegiance to Jesus Christ. Integrating these members into the denomination remains a challenge, however, since they are more ambivalent about an Anabaptist identity than are other members.
- The rapid demographic shift in age among Mennonites is a critical issue for the denomination. Without a major influx of younger people, questions of Anabaptist identity will take a lower profile to the question of mere survival.
- The findings about racial/ethnic members are among the most encouraging of this study. Not only are these members younger on average, they also bring a rich spiritual diversity to Mennonite Church USA.
- The shift to Sunday morning worship as the only religious service of the week along with the decline in Sunday school attendance, pose challenges for pastors and congregations seeking to influence members who are less engaged in church and increasingly more assimilated in the broader culture.
- The forces of modern and postmodern culture—professionalism, education, individualism and suburbanization—continue to shape Mennonites, who are more assimilated in the broader culture than ever before.
- The increased political identification of Mennonites threatens to polarize members around controversial issues.

Conrad L. Kanagy is associate professor of sociology at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College and an ordained minister in Lancaster Mennonite Conference. He is author of the forthcoming Road Signs and Guideposts, *which provides an in-depth look at many of the issues addressed in this article. The book will be accompanied by a set of congregational resources on DVD and CD. The following graciously reviewed and provided helpful feedback for the three essays: Ron Byler, Leonard Dow, Gilberto Flores, Keith Harder, Rodolfo Jimenez, Donald Kraybill, Marty Lehman, Iris de León-Hartshorn, Freeman Miller, Yvonne Platts, Marathana Prothro, Valentina Satvedi, Jim Schrag, Jorge Vallejos and Roy Williams. Many thanks also to the other two members of the three-denominational research team (Carl D. Bowman of Bridgewater (Va.) College and Donald Kraybill of Elizabethtown College) and to the many congregations, members and pastors who participated in Mennonite Member Profile 2006. Without their participation the study would not have been possible. Mennonite Member Profile 2006 was funded by grants from Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership and churchwide agencies, including a major grant from MMA. Other financial support came from Schowalter Foundation, Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Disaster Service, Mennonite Financial Services, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Goodville Mutual Casualty Company and private contributors.*

Note: The percentages for loyalty (page 9) do not add to 100, since each category (congregation, denomination, area conference, broader church) is a separate variable, with four categories—very strong, strong, somewhat weak and very weak. The percentages are for those who indicate "very strong" for variable—congregation, denomination, area conference, broader church.—*CK*

Designing the study

In the summer of 2005, 124 Mennonite Church USA congregations were selected from the denominational database of 965. A scientific selection process insured that members of these congregations represented all members in Mennonite Church USA. Pastors received a letter of invitation for their congregation to participate in the study. Nearly 85 percent of these congregations submitted a membership directory. Those who declined or failed to respond were replaced, resulting in a final sample of 120 participating congregations.

Using membership directories from participating congregations, members 18 and older were randomly selected to receive a survey. This process yielded a database of 3,080 members and their addresses. Mennonite Member Profile 2006 was mailed on Feb. 14. By early summer, 76 percent of respondents had returned a usable questionnaire for a total of 2,216 surveys.

Racial/ethnic people are usually underrepresented in social science research. This was true of the 1972 and 1989 Church Member Profiles, which included too few racial/ethnic members for any meaningful analysis. Because of this historic underrepresentation, Mennonite Member Profile 2006 included a special sample of racial/ethnic members from 22 congregations in three urban areas—Philadelphia, Chicago and Los Angeles. Combining racial/ethnic members who were part of the representative member sample with those in the urban sample yielded a sample size of 475 racial/ethnic members in Mennonite Member Profile 2006. The racial/ethnic distribution of these combined samples was 26 percent African American, 25 percent Latino/Hispanic, 25 percent Asian, 4 percent Native American, 6 percent African immigrant, 9 percent mixed and 7 percent other.

Project Partners in each urban area invited congregational participation. Partners were Yvonne Platts and Freeman Miller, who represented the Philadelphia Urban Ministries Partnership, Rodolfo Jimenez, who serves with Mennonite Central Committee in Chicago, and Valentina Satvedi, who represented the Center for Anabaptist Leadership in Los Angeles. The work of these partners was critical to the participation and overall response of congregations in these urban areas.

In addition, 500 active and active-without-charge Mennonite ministers also received a full-length member profile. Of these, 319 returned a completed profile for a response rate of 65 percent.—*Conrad L. Kanagy*

Profiles in

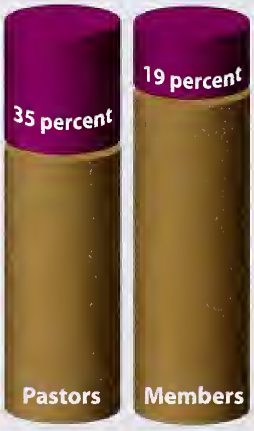
A look at Mennonite Church USA ministers and members

by Conrad L. Kanagy

Mennonite Member Profile 2006 was sent to a sample of 500 active and active-without-charge ministers in Mennonite Church USA. Sixty-five percent of these ministers responded to the survey. What have we learned about Mennonite pastors and how they compare to lay members?

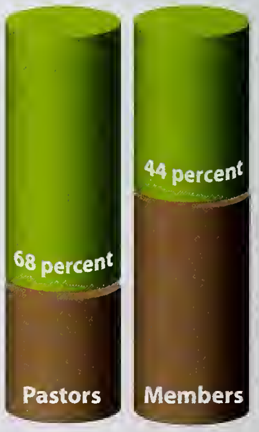
Childhood socialization: Differences between pastors and lay members show up early in life. Pastors attended church more regularly as children than members—96 percent attended weekly, compared with 87 percent of members. Pastors (59 percent) are more likely to identify a "specific moment" when they accepted Christ as Lord and Savior compared with members (49 percent). And pastors were baptized earlier in their lives—at 12.5 years of age on average, compared with 13.9 for members.

Demographics: The average age of pastors and members is the same (54 years), and pastors are as likely as members to have "other than Mennonite" backgrounds. But pastors differ substantially in educational levels, with 75 percent having a college education, compared with 38 percent of members. Pastors are much more likely to have had a Mennonite education than members, with 30 percent attending a Mennonite high school (17 percent of members), 35 percent graduating from a four-year Mennonite college or university (19 percent of members) and 40 percent graduating from a Mennonite seminary (2 percent of members).



🟪 **Graduate of a four-year Mennonite college or university**

Spirituality: Indicators of spirituality among ministers are higher than among members. Sixty-eight percent of pastors report that their religious beliefs are the "most important thing in their life," compared with 44 percent of members. Eighty-one percent of pastors describe their relationship with God as "close" or "very close," compared with 67 percent of members. And 87 percent of pastors identify themselves as "born again," compared with 78 percent of members.



🟩 **Religious beliefs are the "most important thing in their life"**

Theology: Pastors tend to select "middle" responses when asked about theological beliefs, likely reflecting their understanding of the complexity of theological issues. While a majority of members (51 percent) believe that "God controls most events in my daily life," more pastors (64 percent) chose a different response—"God guides me but does not control the events of my daily life."

When asked why Jesus died on the cross, members (84 percent) were more likely than pastors (64 percent) to say that "Jesus had to die to complete God's plan of salvation." Responding to the same question, pastors (24 percent) were more likely than members (9 percent) to say that "Jesus willingly died to show the power of nonviolent love."

The Holy Spirit: Pastors are more like racial/ethnic members in their experiences of the Holy Spirit than are other members. Seventy-seven percent of pastors believe the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are "genuine gifts of God's Spirit to some Christians," compared with 61 percent of members. And 66 percent of pastors (compared with 44 percent of members) have personally experienced charismatic gifts, including casting out demons, speaking in tongues, prophesying, the baptism of the Holy Spirit and healing. Forty-six percent of pastors state that these experiences have been within the past year.

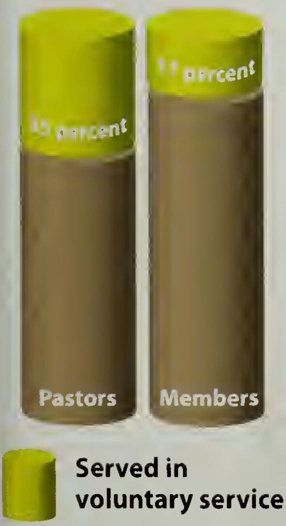
contrast

Pastors are more aware of issues of racism in the church and more supportive of efforts to overcome these.

Politics: Pastors are often more politically liberal than members and more concerned about issues of social justice. Pastors are evenly divided between political parties (29 percent identifying with each party) compared with members, who are far more likely to be Republican than Democrat. More pastors choose "Independent" (27 percent) than do members (15 percent).

Pastors are more aware of issues of racism in the church and more supportive of efforts to overcome these, with 41 percent saying it is "very important" that church leaders discuss and address issues of racism, compared with 28 percent of members.

Mennonite Church USA: The commitment to and connections within Mennonite Church USA are stronger. Fifty-six percent of pastors said they will "always want to be a member" of Mennonite Church USA, compared with 48 percent of members. Twice as many pastors (35 percent) served in voluntary service, as did members (17 percent); while three times as many pastors (21 percent compared with 7 percent of members) served in an overseas assignment for three months or more.



Anabaptist identity: In their religious identity, pastors are more likely to define themselves as Mennonite or Anabaptist—84 percent of pastors compared with 66 percent of members.

Sixty-one percent of ministers "completely agree" that "nonviolence as a way of living is very important to me," compared with 40 percent of members, and 51 percent of pastors completely agree that it is "wrong for Christians to fight in any war" compared with 32 percent of members.

Seventy-two percent of pastors "completely disagree" that "the U.S. did the right thing by going to war against Iraq" compared with 46 percent of members who disagree.

Pastoral priorities: Pastors and members differ in their understanding of what should be the priorities of pastors. When asked to check the three highest priorities, members most often affirmed preaching sermons (46 percent) and providing pastoral counseling and care (32 percent). While pastors also affirm preaching as the highest priority, they also see "shaping the congregation's vision" (42 percent) and "equipping members for ministry" (41 percent) as other top priorities.

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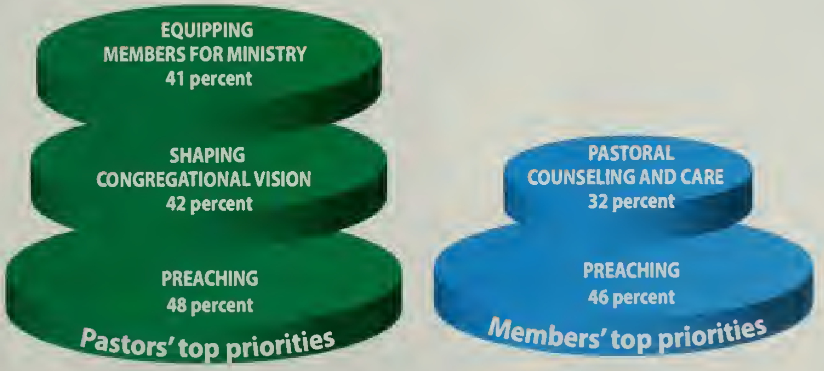
Pastors and members differ in their understanding of what should be the priorities of pastors.



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Racial/ethnic pastors: Mennonite Member Profile 2006 included a small sample of 37 racial/ethnic pastors (24 percent African American, 5 percent Asian, 5 percent Native American, 57 percent Latino/Hispanic, and 5 percent other). Some of the findings among these pastors include the following:

- 72 percent said their religious beliefs are the most important thing in their life;
- 44 percent were baptized in an "other than Mennonite" church;
- 89 percent call themselves "born again";
- 89 percent believe that the charismatic gifts are genuine gifts of God's Spirit;
- 64 percent say they will always want to be a part of their denomination;
- 71 percent believe it is very important that leaders and staff of church-related agencies reflect racial/ethnic diversity.

Conclusion: While these differences between Mennonite ministers and members may come as a surprise to some, they are confirmed by other sociological studies of clergy and members. Undoubtedly these differences play out in congregational conflicts and in the challenges of providing effective pastoral leadership. However, the differences may be vital and even necessary for effective ministry and congregational growth. Where ministers and members are too much alike, congregations may have difficulty moving beyond the status quo.

While I do not analyze the root causes of the differences between pastors and members here, several factors may play a part in the shaping of pastors:

- Earlier childhood religious and church experiences within which God's call is felt more deeply.
- More education, particularly higher levels of Mennonite education.
- Stronger connections in the denomination and the broader Mennonite church.
- More service experiences, particularly abroad.
- Deeper encounters with human need and spiritual realities in the context of pastoral care.

Understanding the differences between pastors and members is important. For pastors, clarity about these differences may provide a helpful perspective when working through congregational conflicts and misunderstandings. For members, recognizing and validating their pastor's distinctives could lead to greater empowerment of pastoral leadership and fulfillment of the congregation's missional calling—communicating the good news of Jesus Christ across the street and around the world.

Conrad L. Kanagy is associate professor of sociology at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College and an ordained minister in Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

Pasadena Mennonite Church

Opportunities and challenges

Racial/ethnic Mennonites in the United States

by Conrad L. Kanagy

In contrast to other denominations with historic European roots, Mennonite Church USA includes a large and rapidly growing number of racial/ethnic members and congregations. Racial/ethnic is a self-designation by groups with members who are African-American, Latino/Hispanic, Native American, Asian and "other than Anglo."

There are 169 racial/ethnic congregations (18 percent of the denomination) and more than 12,000 members (11 percent of the denomination) in these congregations. Based on Mennonite Member Profile 2006 findings, I estimate that another 3-4 percent of racial/ethnic members attend predominantly white congregations.

The largest number of racial/ethnic congregations are Latino/Hispanic (46 percent), followed by African-American (35 percent), Asian (11 percent) and Native American (8 percent). African-American congregations have the largest membership block, with 52 percent of racial/ethnic members in the denomination (one-third of these attend a single congregation—Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va.). Latino/Hispanic congregations are next with 35 percent, followed by Asian congregations (9 percent) and Native American congregations (4 percent).

Demographics: By and large, racial/ethnic members are more urban, younger and less affluent than white or Anglo Mennonites:

- More racial/ethnic members live in large urban areas, with 39 percent residing in cities with populations greater than 250,000 compared with just 8 percent of other Mennonites.
- Racial/ethnic members are nine years younger (46 years of age) on average than Anglo Mennonites (55 years of age). While the percent of white Mennonites between 18 and 45 years of age is quite low (29 percent), more than 50 percent of racial/ethnic members are between 18 and 45 years old.

The combination of a charismatic spirituality, an active evangelical witness and support for social justice may represent a new kind of Anabaptist identity that all Mennonites can learn from.

- Racial/ethnic members are less affluent. In 2005, 18 percent of racial/ethnic households had incomes under $15,000, compared with only 6 percent of other Mennonites. One-third of racial/ethnic households earned under $25,000, compared with 15 percent of other Mennonites.
- Sixteen percent of racial/ethnic members lack health insurance, compared with just 4 percent of white Mennonites without coverage. In the United States as a whole, 16 percent of Americans are not covered by health insurance.
- There are substantial differences in education among racial/ethnic groups. Asians are the most highly educated, with 57 percent having a college

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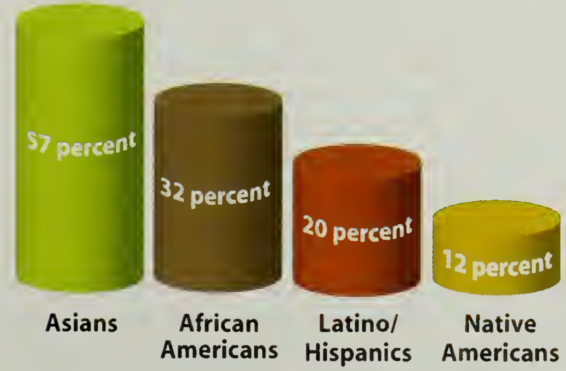
Educational differences among racial/ethnic groups



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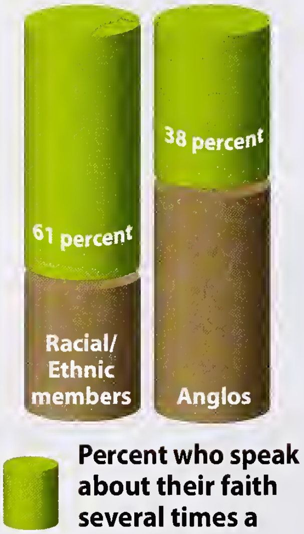
degree, compared with 32 percent of African-Americans, 20 percent of Latino/Hispanics and 12 percent of Native Americans. Native Americans are most likely not to have completed high school, at 41 percent, followed by Latino/Hispanics at 23 percent, Asians at 13 percent and African-Americans at 6 percent.

Political identity: Racial/ethnic members are less likely to identify with a political party than other Mennonites, with 27 percent claiming no political party, in contrast to just 11 percent of Anglos. This difference is in large part due to the immigrant status of many racial/ethnic members—38 percent of immigrants do not identify with a political party, compared with 16 percent among racial/ethnic members born in the United States.

Racial/ethnic members who do identify with a political party are slightly more likely to be Democrat (32 percent) than Republican (30 percent), compared with Anglo Mennonites, who are more likely to be Republican (52 percent) than Democrat (21 percent).



Percent who speak about their faith several times a month or more

Witness and outreach: Racial/ethnic members are more evangelistic in their witness to the gospel than are Anglo Mennonites. Sixty-one percent of racial/ethnic members speak about their faith to people outside their church several times a month or more, compared with 38 percent of other Mennonites. And 29 percent of racial/ethnic members regularly (several times a month or more) invite non-Christians to their church, compared with 7 percent of Anglo Mennonites.

The Holy Spirit: Racial/ethnic members' understanding of the Holy Spirit as well as experiences with the charismatic gifts of the Spirit distinguish them from other Mennonites. Racial/ethnic members are more likely to say the charismatic gifts of healing, prophesying and speaking in tongues are "genuine gifts of God's Spirit," with 83 percent of them agreeing, compared with 59 percent of other Mennonites. Seventy percent of racial/ethnic members have had personal experience with the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit (casting out demons, speaking in tongues, prophesying, healing), compared with 42 percent of other Mennonites.

Racism: Eighteen percent of racial/ethnic members acknowledge they have been unfairly treated because of their race and/or ethnicity by other Mennonites. Not surprisingly, racial/ethnic members are more likely than other Mennonites to express concern about racism and to support anti-racism efforts in both the church and society to overcome barriers to equal access and opportunity.

- Fifty percent of racial/ethnic members believe it is "very important" that leaders and staff of church-related agencies reflect the racial/ethnic diversity of Mennonite congregations. This compares with 26 percent of Anglo Mennonites.
- Twenty-eight percent of racial/ethnic members "strongly support" intentional efforts to hire and promote racial/ethnic minorities in the larger society, compared with 4 percent of white Mennonites.
- Thirty-nine percent of racial/ethnic members believe it is "very important" that church leaders address issues of race and racism, compared with 27 percent of white Mennonites.

Social, economic, cultural, geographic, historical, residential and language differences between Anglo and racial/ethnic members are too often maintained rather than challenged.

Conclusion: The growing number of racial/ethnic members and congregations is perhaps the greatest opportunity and greatest challenge for Mennonite Church USA. The opportunities are related to the following:

- Racial/ethnic members are more urban than other Mennonites and offer a model for how to be "Anabaptist in the city"—something few Mennonites in North America have experienced.
- The younger age of racial/ethnic members offers vitality to an aging denomination.
- The experience of the Holy Spirit among racial/ethnic members represents a spiritual stream that other Mennonites can benefit from, some who have been hesitant or resistant to diverse expressions of the Spirit.
- The greater evangelical witness of racial/ethnic Mennonites is a much needed example of faithfulness in a denomination that has recognized its

GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS

missional calling but whose members too often lack courage or passion to express in word and deed the good news of Jesus Christ.

- The poverty of some racial/ethnic Mennonites should convict more affluent and materially comfortable Anglo Mennonites to share their resources with racial/ethnic congregations and to support the efforts of racial/ethnic constituency groups.
- Racial/ethnic Mennonites reveal that evangelical Christianity is not solely the possession of the political right. The combination of a charismatic spirituality, an active evangelical witness and support for social justice may represent a new kind of Anabaptist identity that all Mennonites can learn from.

Unfortunately, there are substantial challenges alongside these opportunities. Several include:

- Many Anglo Mennonites are not aware of the rich racial and ethnic diversity of their denomination.
- It is not clear that Anglo Mennonites fully appreciate the gifts that racial/ethnic members and congregations bring to the denomination.
- Anglo Mennonites are less interested in antiracism efforts than are racial/ethnic Mennonites, perhaps because racism has become politicized in the United States, and antiracism efforts are more often identified with the political left than the right.
- Social, economic, cultural, geographic, historical, residential and language differences between Anglo and racial/ethnic members are too often maintained rather than challenged and in the process become barriers to the development of meaningful relationships and collaboration across race and ethnicity.

Fully overcoming, in the name of Christ, both the intended and unintended sins of racism in Mennonite Church USA will be necessary if the opportunities I have described are to be realized. It is also possible that the future of the denomination may hang on the commitment of all its members to complete this reconciling work of our Lord.

Conrad L. Kanagy is associate professor of sociology at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College and an ordained minister in Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

The realities of our church life

James Schrag is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

In both of my lifetime roles of church leadership—23 years as a pastor and 10 years as a denominational executive—the foundation for leadership has been a mix of spiritual and sociological knowledge and perspective. This combination of human and divine—my knowledge of Scripture, with the application of human observation—has formed my intuition. It brings a balance to understanding how the realities of our church life and witness are created and carried forward.

This is why I am delighted with the initial reports of the Church Member Profile organized by Donald B. Kraybill and assisted by Conrad L. Kanagy, who specializes in the Mennonite Church USA data and compares it to studies in 1972 and 1989. Receiving this information is like peering through a recently washed window that was smudged by many fingerprints. I reflect on Paul's lament that "now we see in a mirror, dimly ... " (1 Corinthians 13:12), hoping for added insight this side of the "face to face" clarity we anticipate in heaven. Sociological research is like acquiring a valued companion—as my father once told me, "A real friend is one who will tell you exactly how it is."

Our view of ourselves and our reality changes slowly but continuously.

Lyle Schaller, a practical-minded pundit of "what works," popular in the 1970s, gave me a piece of churchly sociological wisdom when he said, "Congregations almost always vote no before they vote yes." Knowing that made me a better pastor. How congregations make decisions or committees function is not always "spiritual" stuff; it is about our human natures.

In the early 1970s, when I began as a pastor in a rural congregation, we made copies on a purple-print mimeograph machine. A few years later the trustees agonized whether we could justify buying a copier. In the second congregation I served, the office secretary told me we ought to buy a computer. "Why?" I asked. Soon the advance of technology gave me the obvious answer to my question. These days perhaps 90 percent of my desk work involves staring at a screen and pressing keys on a keyboard. Typewriters and dictaphones are no more. The transformation process that resulted in our new denomination might not have happened without the rapid exchange of data and ideas made possible by email.

It is a truism to say that things have changed since 1972. Thirty years later, in 2002, we became a new church with a new name—Mennonite Church USA. This new reality is the result of other changes; it is less the cause of change, only five years later. We simply live and behave differently now—we are generally more affluent, more highly educated and less rural. We have a membership of growing racial/ethnic diversity that reflects the sociological realities around us. We are more open to participation in secular politics and perhaps have allowed that human passion to color our spiritual perceptions more than in the past.

What does this data about change mean for us in our calling as Christians who view Christ's teachings and example through the lens of Anabaptist reform and Mennonite culture? Mennonites have often found our differences with others as our reason to exist—our game was to make comparisons, both to other Christians and "the world." What if the data now informs us that we are now more like other Christians than we thought? Or what if what we once considered worldly is now commonplace among us? If we find our spiritual diversity increasing, or that pastors and congregations view things differently, what will we make of the proof offered to us in this current data?

Our view of ourselves and our reality changes slowly but continuously, moving like the hands of a clock. The answer to What time is it? often comes only when an alarm rings—when something happens, such as the creation of Mennonite Church USA, or when 9/11 awakens us from our slumber to see things that were happening before our eyes but that we had not taken care to notice.

Thank God for the sociologist/theologians among us. May God bless their work of offering us lenses to see ourselves and God more clearly so that we know how to pray with both gratitude and supplication.

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Defeating the temptation of violence**—Susan Mark Landis
- **The temptation to compromise**—Randy Good

Recommendation to ordain women fails

Lancaster Mennonite Conference vote falls short by less than 1 percent.

Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference ministers did not sufficiently affirm a recommendation from the LMC Board of Bishops that would have allowed for the ordination of women. The decision emerged from a ballot count on Jan. 19; all active ordained and licensed ministerial leaders in the conference were eligible to vote.

There are 455 active credentialed leaders in LMC. Of the 359 credentialed leaders who voted, 65.74 percent affirmed the recommendation and 34.26 percent did not affirm the recommendation. LMC's constitution requires 66.67 percent for approval.

The vote followed a lengthy process of spiritual discernment. In March 2006, the Board of Bishops introduced a process of spiritual discernment to consider a policy that would enable congregations to follow their convictions in discerning the gifts and calling of people—regardless of gender—into ordained leadership roles in the congregation.

Following 10 regional cluster meetings for credentialed leaders and three forums for lay people in April and May 2006, the 23-member Board of Bishops reviewed the diverse feedback from across the conference.

This feedback—along with dwelling in God's Word, prayer, fasting, listening, searching and study—moved the Board of Bishops to approve a recommendation in August 2006. The recommendation was then sent to leaders with ministerial credentials for their discernment and affirmation.

The bishops' recommendation said

- that Lancaster Mennonite Conference respect each member congregation in its discernment of Scripture, as led by the Holy Spirit, to call and affirm people to serve in ministry and pastoral leadership and
- that the LMC Board of Bishops license and/or ordain, regardless of gender, those who have responded to God's call, who have been affirmed by their respective congregation and who meet LMC qualifications for credentialing.

The recommendation also includes the following understandings:

- To most fully respect the differing scriptural understandings, beliefs and practices of our congregations, the role of bishop and similar conference oversight roles, will be reserved for men.
- The Board of Bishops will assist in defining protocol for healthy, God-honoring male and female relationships in ministry teams.

Within Lancaster Mennonite Conference there are a variety of beliefs and practices regarding roles of men and women in ministry and pastoral leadership. Contrary to the either/or clarity that some people wished to bring to this discussion, the practice of LMC congregations is more accurately described as a continuum in which women are involved to lesser or greater degrees in congregations.

Through the process of spiritual discernment, it was clear that equally sincere and faithful people understand Scripture differently and come to differing conclusions regarding the practice of women in leadership and ordination.

Because this recommendation was not affirmed, the policy affirmed by credentialed leaders in 1999 will remain in effect. The 1999 recommendation approved granting a license for specific ministry to women serving on church-planting teams, pastoral teams or other specific ministries.

While this license grants all the privileges and responsibilities of an ordained person, this credential does not lead toward ordination for women. The 1999 policy states that men will serve as lead pastors in LMC congregations and any exceptions require the approval of the bishop board.*—from a release by Lancaster Mennonite Conference*

Contrary to the either/or clarity that some people wished to bring to this discussion, the practice of Lancaster Mennonite Conference congregations is more accurately described as a continuum in which women are involved to lesser or greater degrees.
—Board of Bishops

Executive Board gets news

Results from the Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference leaders' vote on ordination for women reached the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board while it was meeting in Meridian, Miss., Jan. 18-20 (see page 20).

Before gathering to pray for the members of Lancaster Conference in the room, three women who are waiting for ordination in Lancaster Conference were invited to share their responses.

"I really appreciate the support of the bishop board," said Addie Banks, from the King of Glory Tabernacle, Bronx, N.Y. "I and my sisters will continue in our pastoral ministries as called by God."

"I hope we can get really creative in walking on from here," said Jane Hoober Peifer, pastor at Blossom Hill Mennonite Church in Lancaster, and "find a third way."

Iris de León-Hartshorn, Lancaster, was in her first meeting as a new member of Mennonite Church USA's Executive Leadership; she is director of the intercultural relations office.

"I ask for prayers for all young women in seminary," said de León-Hartshorn. "Some are already leaving for other denominations."

Executive Board member Samuel Lopez is also a bishop in Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

"I feel the pain of the women," Lopez said, "and I know many bishops will be feeling the pain."
—Everett J. Thomas

Mennonite Church USA Executive Board meets in Mississippi to show solidarity

Everett Thomas

Nelson Roth, pastor of the Gulfhaven Mennonite Church in Gulfport, Miss., tells the Executive Board that his congregation has received 25 new community members as a result of the recovery process after Hurricane Katrina. Other leaders from Gulf States Mennonite Conference and their spouses are behind Roth.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Board wanted to show solidarity with Mennonite victims of Hurricane Katrina by holding its meeting at the Jubilee Mennonite Church in Meridian, Miss., Jan. 18-20.

What board members learned from leaders of Gulf States Mennonite Conference was that the response from the broader Mennonite church did not demonstrate mutual aid.

"MDS [Mennonite Disaster Service] is a big piece of my heart," said Jubilee's co-pastor Duane Maust. "They and MCC [Mennonite Central Committee] are doing a lot of good along the coast. But [Mennonites in the Gulf States] slipped through the cracks."

Approximately $10 million was funneled through MDS for relief efforts in the stricken area. But only $189,000 was given to help Mennonite Church USA members in the region.

"What shook me," said Robert Zehr, Gulf States conference moderator, "was that my church would go help my Catholic neighbors and not me. ... You don't have to be poor, and the poorest of the poor, to hurt."

Jim Schrag, executive director for Mennonite Church USA, agreed that the church needs to develop new ways to respond to catastrophes besides what MDS can do.

"Somewhere it is going to happen again," Schrag said, "and we are going to need to learn how to better channel mutual aid money to other members of the church."

New church member profile released

Who Mennonite Church USA is today was a major feature of the Executive Board's meeting. Sociologist Conrad Kanagy unveiled some of his findings from the 2006 church member profile (see page 8). Herald Press will release Kanagy's book on the findings at the San José 2007 convention.

Some of Kanagy's findings surprised Executive Board members. Drawing the most attention was the level of commitment to various parts of the church. When asked whether they had "very strong personal commitment" to congregations, area conferences, Mennonite Church USA and the broader Christian church, respondents placed "area conference" last. In addition to data about how all members answered the question, the survey also includes responses from new members, underrepresented racial/ethnic members and pastors (see box).

The plight of area conferences has been the focus of the Constituency Leaders Council's work for the past year. A CLC task force was created to address issues surrounding area conference positioning in the new denomination (see "Leaders Look at Role of Area Conferences," Nov. 7, 2006). But when the Executive Board received the CLC report, some members were unsure whether the task force adequately addressed the needs of area conferences.

"When I read the [CLC task force] report," said Janeen Bertsche Johnson, "it didn't go in the direction I thought it would. I expected more about the role of conferences, but it went more to the role of CLC."

The board approved the task force report, but the vote was not unanimous.

"What this [report] is really doing is institutionalizing the CLC," said Merrill Moyer, who did not vote to accept the report. "It doesn't create better organization and communication with conferences."

The CLC and Executive Board will meet together March 22-23 and review the report together.

Very strong personal commitment to:

Commitment to	2006	New Member	Racial/ Ethnic	Pastor
Congregation	58	56	62	81
Area conference	12	9	20	37
Denomination	34	27	34	42
Broader church	30	40	35	41

Source: 2006 Mennonite Church USA member profile

Leaders in Gulf States Mennonite Conference say they 'fell through the cracks' after Hurricane Katrina; new profile of MC USA members released.

Antiracism

Work to dismantle racism in Mennonite Church USA was a third major theme of the board's meeting. Before the meeting, the board's antiracism team surveyed all denominational agencies about their efforts at antiracism and brought a compilation of the results. Much of the data focused on how many underrepresented racial/ethnic members were on boards and staff and how much each agency was spending on antiracism work.

"We're beginning a baseline here," said Susan Mark Landis, staff person for the antiracism team. "We've not asked for these things before."

Executive Board members were generally appreciative of the efforts across the system.

"We're very encouraged," said Addie Banks, a member of the antiracism team. "Awareness is increasing, and that is progress."

Carlos Romero, executive director for Mennonite Education Agency, agreed.

"If I have one critique [of antiracism work]," Romero said, "it is that we have not taken adequate time to stop and celebrate progress. We have come a long way since the early 1990s."

Mennonite Publishing Network reviewed

The board was also ready to celebrate good news from Mennonite Publishing Network. MPN board chair Phil Bontrager was present to participate in a special review process and noted that by July the remainder of MPN's $5.1 million debt will be paid off. Proceeds from the 2006 sale of the Provident Bookstore chain are being used to repay loans made to MPN by Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA five years ago.

"We need to celebrate [when we have] success in the church," said moderator-elect Sharon Waltner. "How wonderful things have turned out! You've brought a reason for celebrating."

Jim Harder, chair of the Executive Board's resources committee, attributed MPN's success to Bontrager's leadership.

"Phil is a hero for Mennonite Church USA," said Harder. "He was there when we needed him."

Bontrager listed five challenges for MPN as it moves into the future, including improving market share within Mennonite congregations in Canada and the United States.

"We don't do well in congregations that are *laissez faire* about choosing [curriculum] resources and let their Sunday school teachers choose their materials," Bontrager said. MPN does much better in congregations where leadership makes the decision about what resources to buy, he said.

In other matters, the Executive Board

- agreed to recommend to delegates at San José 2007 that Mennonite Church USA join Christian Churches Together, a coalition of Protestant, Catholic, Evangelical, Orthodox and Pentecostal churches in the United States;
- approved a statement of appreciation for Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. That part of the Lutheran church recently repudiated the condemnations of Anabaptists in the 16th-century Augsburg Confession (see "Lutherans Repudiate Condemnations," Dec. 5, 2006);
- approved continuing dialogue with the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.);
- approved an agreement with Mennonite Church Canada that includes commitment to hold a joint meeting in Canada (see "JEC Recommends 2008 Canada-U.S. Gathering," Dec. 5, 2006);
- established a balanced budget of $2,082,009 for Executive Board's fiscal year 2007-2008;
- established a grievance policy for use by agencies and churchwide programs in dispute situations.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Diller nominated as MC USA moderator-elect for 2007-09

Mennonite Church USA Executive Board received Ed Diller as the Leadership Discernment Committee's nomination for the next moderator-elect for Mennonite Church USA at the board's Jan. 18-20 meeting in Meridian, Miss. The Delegate Assembly will be presented with the nomination at the San José 2007 convention in July.

With the delegates' affirmation, Diller will be elected to a four-year term beginning after the 2007 convention. He would spend the first two years as moderator-elect and chair of the Constituency Leaders Council, then succeed current moderator-elect Sharon Waltner, Parker, S.D., as moderator for Mennonite Church USA after Columbus 2009.

Roy Williams, Land O'Lakes, Fla., will continue as moderator for Mennonite Church USA through San José 2007. The moderator chairs the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board.

"This seemed like an interesting opportunity to serve Mennonite Church USA, and life is about pursuing the interesting," Diller said.

"Transformation has been a terrific process. It's lifted our sights to where we need to be working and where we need to align our efforts. Now we need to keep moving forward."

Diller is an attorney in Cincinnati and a member of Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship. He currently serves as vice chair of the Mennonite Education Agency board of directors.—*Marathana Prothro of Mennonite Church USA*

Mission agencies work at mutuality

China and India becoming more secular every day, speaker says.

Representatives from 11 mission agencies (see box) at Jan. 15-20 Council of International Anabaptist Ministries conference reviewed the benefits, as well as the risks, of forming partnerships in international missions. The CIM conference was held at the Gilmary Diocesan Center near Pittsburgh. This year's gathering featured Phill Butler and Leaderwell Pohsgnap.

Butler, former journalist with *ABC News* and founder of *Intercristo* and *Interdev*, heads *vision-Synergy*, an initiative focused on international network development for strategic ministry.

Pohsgnap, who lives in India, served as the former principal at Union Biblical Seminary in Pune, India, and as a missionary in Kenya for several years. He is a board member of World Vision International and the international director of the Global LEAD Alliance with Global Disciples.

Regional meetings provided places for administrative staff to talk about programming in specific regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

"CNN syndrome" is a belief that because people watch the world, they think they … understand the world.—Phill Butler

CIM members elected Ron Flaming, director of international programs at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), as chairperson for the next two years. Galen Burkholder, current chairperson and director of Global Disciples, moderated the meetings throughout the week.

At the Association of Anabaptist Missiologists banquet on Jan. 18, James Kraybill, senior executive with Mennonite Mission Network, presented two awards in recognition of the work of John A. and Alice Lapp and Fred and Grace Holland.

John A. Lapp served as executive director of MCC from 1985 to 1996. The Hollands served with Brethren in Christ World Missions in Zimbabwe and Zambia for 23 years, and Grace chairs the board for Brethren in Christ World Missions.

CIM emerged out of the Council of Mission Board Secretaries (COMBS), formed in 1958 to engage MCC with other mission boards, said Lapp. CIM represents all international Anabaptist agencies and MCC, and it includes overseas people from newly formed churches.

According to Lapp, the name changed from COMBS to CIM in the late 1970s in order to engage Anabaptist education institutions with international programs and because "international" is a more neutral term than "mission board."

Since its name change, CIM has held regular meetings with special themes, topics and speakers. Lapp said he views CIM as important in developing friendships and mutual respect among the agencies and to help the agencies understand each other's work as mutually enriching.

According to Lapp, COMBS provided the opportunity for agencies to talk with one another about "comity concerns." When COMBS existed, the locations in which the agencies worked remained separated. But when the agencies became more specialized, overlap in many overseas locations occurred. CIM, a fraternal organization, no longer recognizes comity, he said, because there is so much work that overlaps between agencies.

In one session, Butler shared about leading, following and partnering within today's social, technical and cultural contexts. He illustrated his points with stories and statistics from all over the world.

The following evening he shared the importance of "understanding creativity" as a leader in international ministry. Butler said leaders must have a "kingdom mentality," take responsibility for identifying the past, present and future of their agency—as well as continually working on internal and external alignment with constituencies.

In another session he described the "CNN syndrome," a belief that because people watch the world, they think they know and understand the world. He encouraged agencies to move beyond this limiting mindset.

Pohsgnap provided a perspective from Asia and reported on religious trends in many Asian countries. For example, most people are either extremely religious or secularist. Few are lukewarm, he said, with China and India becoming more secular each day.

"Money is a new god in India," he said.

Pohsgnap encouraged the audience to "strive for collaboration and partnership even if it's never achieved in its perfect form … in partnership we have a common purpose and we will make sure every person in the world has the opportunity to hear Jesus Christ."—*Anna Groff*

Mission and service agencies present

- Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission
- Brethren in Christ World Missions
- Mennonite Partners in China
- Eastern Mennonite Missions
- Global Disciples Network
- Mennonite Brethren Mission and Service International
- Mennonite Central Committee
- Mennonite Church Canada Witness
- Mennonite Mission Network
- Rosedale Mennonite Missions
- Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions

Darfur region war continues to escalate

Mennonite Central Committee spent $122,700 for peacemaking in 2006.

Peacemakers are helping communities resolve differences and recover from violence in Sudan's Darfur region. But the devastating four-year-old war that has killed hundreds of thousands of civilians continues to escalate.

The situation in Darfur has deteriorated badly over the last year, says Joseph Akwoc, Darfur project officer for the Sudan Council of Churches. Both sides of the conflict are committing human rights violations, relief workers are being attacked and the Sudanese government is preventing the deployment of international peacekeepers.

Akwoc says many people are afraid that relief workers will soon need to be evacuated from Darfu,r and chaos will reign.

According to Akwoc, the only way to bring about peace in Darfur is to involve all the region's communities in a dialogue about coexistence.

"This is the key to all the solutions," he says. "Because the Darfurians, unless they ... express their opinion, their ideas about the solution of this problem, nothing good can be achieved."

To that end, the Sudan Council of Churches, a partner organization of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), is organizing workshops on peacemaking to bring together communities that often view each other as enemies.

Akwoc recently led joint peacemaking workshops for five villages in southern Darfur. The villages included members of Arab and non-Arab ethnic groups that have been divided by the conflict between Sudan's predominantly Arab government and Darfur's rebels.

"All are playing a part, are part and parcel, of the whole conflict, so we are training all of them," Akwoc says.

The groups met several times—first in the nearby town of Nyala and later in each participating village. During the sessions which lasted several days, participants bonded by attending workshops and eating and sleeping in the same facilities.

"It was very effective," Akwoc says. "They said, 'Thank you, SCC, because we were not able to come together (before). ... We did not know how to talk to one another.'"

MCC provided $122,700 to a partner, the Darfur Emergency Response Organization, for peacemaking projects in Darfur last year. The Sudan Council of Churches works in Darfur with funding from Darfur Emergency Response Organization. The Sudan Council of Churches is also working with school teachers, women's groups and community leaders in Darfur to identify and care for traumatized children.

Unless they express their opinion, their ideas about the solution of this problem, nothing good can be achieved.—Joseph Akwoc

One method, Akwoc says, is to give children materials to draw and paint about their experiences then use their artwork as a basis for conversation.

"We meant by doing that to create a kind of atmosphere where we can plant into their hearts the seeds of peace," Akwoc says.—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee*

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CALENDAR

The Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society will hold ***Pennsylvania German language classes*** March 7-10. Classes will be held at The Society, 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster, Pa. For more information or to register please contact the **Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society** at 717-393-9745 or at lmhs@lmhs.org.

Anabaptist Peace Center, Washington, DC, presents ***Hymn Sing for Peace 2007***, Sat., April 14, 2 p.m. at the northeast corner of Lafayette Park (across from the White House). Come to sing and enjoy the cherry blossoms! Email keith@apcwdc.mennonite.net for more information.

Puerto Rico Reunion in **Archbold, Ohio**, on July 21-22 for all who have served in Puerto Rico and other interested people. For a registration form, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Juan and Odette Rolón, 107 Park St., Archbold, OH 43502-1339 or send a message to chpn@metalink.net.

Anniversary celebration for 20 years of ministry at **Ralieigh (N.C.) Mennonite Church** and 10 years of ministry through Raleigh Mennonite Church's **Service Adventure Program**, March 17-18. All past members and participants are invited to celebrate these milestones. Contact Anne Cooper for more information at anne.r.cooper@gmail.com.

WORKERS

Adams, Sam, was licensed as pastor of The River Mennonite Church, a new church plant in Bend, Ore., on Dec. 10, 2006.

Gerlach, Jason, was ordained as youth pastor at Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., on Jan. 14.

Mann, Barbara, was licensed as hospice chaplain at Cedar Falls Mennonite Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa, on Dec. 17, 2006.

Ruffin, Jimmie, ended his term as pastor at Fairhaven Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, Ind., on Dec. 31, 2006.

Wittrig, Jerry, ended his term as pastor at North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on Dec. 31, 2006.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Aeschliman, Jacob Allen, Jan. 9, to Kevin and Kristy Liechty Aeschliman, Wauseon, Ohio.

Boshart, Elizabeth Jean and **Nathaniel Dewayne** (twins), Nov. 11, 2006, to Chad and Kathy Constien Boshart, Lincoln, Neb. (see accompanying death notice).

Dawe, Abigail Felicity, Jan. 8, to Dustin and Twila Kanagy Dawe, Chambersburg, Pa.

Fickert, Lillian Nicole, Dec. 14, 2006, to Michael and Kelly McDonough Fickert, Souderton, Pa.

Hochstetler, Noah James, Dec. 23, 2006, to Darin and Kris Swantz Hochstetler, Tiffin, Iowa.

Hofer, Claire Isabel, Dec. 8, 2006, to Colin and Michelle Langeland Hofer, Freeman, S.D.

Koontz, Anne Marie, Jan. 1, to Nathan and Esther Kratzer Koontz, North Newton, Kan.

Leininger, Caden James, Jan. 15, to Nick and Ruby Short Leininger, Wauseon, Ohio.

Lobe, Elias Gregory, Dec. 25, 2006, to Greg and Tamara Awad Lobe, Kitchener, Ont.

Miller, Isabelle Elizabeth, Nov. 28, 2006, to Les and Marina Miller, North English, Iowa.

Miller, Mara Elizabeth, Nov. 27, 2006, to Jeff and Beth Kanagy Miller, Goshen, Ind.

Miller, Zandra Hope, Dec. 28, 2006, to Bryan and Jolene Steiner Miller, Apple Creek, Ohio.

Newswanger, Dillon Christopher, Nov. 2, 2006, to Jon and Shawn Brady Newswanger, Salem, Ore.

Nickell, Carly Fae, Sept. 9, 2006, to James and Candra Kinsinger Nickell, Wellman Iowa.

Older Adults Living with Spirit

Mennonite Association of Retired Persons is seeking new members to become part of the growing community of older adults wanting to remain connected and vital. MARP members currently number over 4,000 from 40+ states! The current MARP board members hail from Ohio, Kansas, Michigan, Illinois, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

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MARP membership supports the short-term service project dubbed "SOOP" which encourages retired folks to "benefit others." There are over 60 locations from which to choose, including some for the "RV'ers."

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RATES	LIFE	3 Years	1 Year
One Person	$300	$40	$20
Two Persons (at one address)	$400	$60	$30

MARP promises to donate to MCC ten percent of new membership fees received through April 2007.

Mennonite Association of Retired Persons

Helen L. Lapp, Executive Director; 771 Route 113, Souderton, PA 18964
(215/866) 721-7730 ~ marp-soop@juno.com ~ http://marp.mennonite.net

Richardson, William Lucas, Nov. 16, 2006, to Sam and Leah Steinmetz Richardson, Indianapolis, Ind.

Sachs, Isaac Emory, Dec. 31, 2006, to Greg and April Gonzol Sachs, Harrisonburg, Va.

Shenk, Jacob Howard, Dec. 28, 2006, to Jeff and Jen Helmuth Shenk, Elkhart, Ind.

Swartzentruber, Emmett Phillip, Jan. 12, to Andy and Jane Miller Swartzentruber, Kalona, Iowa.

Swinger, Brandon Zachary, Dec. 7, 2006, to Dennis Jr. and Arin Thompson Swinger, Lind, Wash.

Waegli, Samuel Frederick, Nov. 17, 2006, to Jay and Becky Schlegel Waegli, Lincoln, Neb.

Weaver, Nathan Jay, Jan. 3, to Michael and Leslie King Weaver, Valparaiso, Ind.

Wenger, Reuben John Ramer, Dec. 20, 2006, to Jonathan and Tonya Ramer Wenger, Madison, Wis.

Witmer, Ruben Thut, Dec. 29, 2006, to Douglas and Rebecca Thut Witmer, Philadelphia, Pa.

Yoder, Jayse Dalton, Dec. 27, 2006, to Brent and Tara Miller Yoder, Wellman, Iowa.

Yoder, Malia Ann, Nov. 1, 2006, to Marlow and Jenny Greiner Yoder, Kalona, Iowa.

Zerger, Garrison William, Dec. 20, 2006, to Todd and Krisha Keimig Zerger, Norton, Kan.

MARRIAGES

Conrad/Ritter: Camron Conrad, Wayland, Iowa, and Leah Ritter, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 30, 2006, at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Coughlan/O'Connor: Aidan Coughlan, Middleton, Va., and Rochelle O'Connor, Salem, Ore., Dec. 30, 2006, at Salem Mennonite Church.

Dayton/Gahman: Jeremy Dayton, Harrisonburg, Va., and Andrea Gahman, Souderton, Pa., Dec. 16, 2006, at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Hostetler/Stoltenberg: Aron Hostetler, Cairo, Neb., and Patricia Stoltenberg, Cairo, Dec. 30, 2006, at St. Mary's Cathedral, Grand Island, Neb.

Kaufman/Ulis: Ashley Kaufman, Strasburg, Pa., and Justin Ulis, New Philadelphia, Ohio, Dec. 9, 2006, at East Chestnut St. Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Lehman/Yoder: Kara Lehman, Bridgewater, Va., and Eric Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 30, 2006, at Hopewell United Methodist Church, Downingtown, Pa.

Showalter/Souder: Clay Showalter, Linville, Va., and Joanna Souder, Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 30, 2006, at Lindale Mennonite Church, Linville.

Stangland/Troyer: Erik Stangland, Brownstown, Ind., and Rachel Troyer, Albion, Ind., Dec. 23, 2006, at Topeka Mennonite Church, Topeka, Ind.

DEATHS

Billman, Howard R., 68, Pipersville, Pa., died Dec. 1, 2006. Spouse: Carol V. Koch Billman. Parents: Walter and Mabel Beegle Billman. Children: Paul E., Susan D., Karen B. Moose; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 8 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Boshart, Nathaniel Dewayne, infant, Lincoln, Neb., died Nov. 16, 2006, of premature birth. Parents: Chad and Kathy Constien Boshart. Funeral: Nov. 22 at Wood River Mennonite Church, Wood River, Neb.

Burkholder, Gladys Schertz, 91, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 17, 2006. Spouse: J. Harold Burkholder (deceased). Parents: Edwin and Emma Schertz. Children: John; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 20 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Buckwalter, J. Harold, 85, Manheim, Pa., died Nov. 13, 2006, of a stroke. Spouse: Helen F. Stauffer Buckwalter. Parents: John and Gertrude Groff Buckwalter. Children: Nancy L., Janet L. Lengacher, Allan; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 20 at Lititz Mennonite Church, Lititz, Pa.

Buckwalter, Lester R., 95, Millersburg, Pa., died Jan. 12. Spouse: Anna E. Book Buckwalter (deceased). Parents: Jason and Frances M. Hershey Buckwalter. Children: Kenneth B., Lois L. Burkholder, Doris A. Gochnauer, Eileen F. Stone, Darlene M. Sharp, Margaret Miller, Mary Hess; 19 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 18 at Masonville Mennonite Church, Washington Boro, Pa.

Carr, Minnie Rhodes, 90, Harrisonburg, Va., died Nov. 22, 2006. Spouse: Raymond Carr Sr. (deceased). Parents: Emmer and Stella Heatwole Rhodes. Children: Leroy, Raymond Jr., Everette, Carolyn Huffman; 15 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 25 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA.

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Derstine, David F., 82, Lansdale, Pa., died Dec. 15, 2006. Spouse: Maxine Troyer Derstine. Parents: David D. and Araminta Fuss Derstine. Children: Anne D. Ehst, Daryl, Barbara Weirich, John; 11 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 19 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Derstine, S. Esther Myers, 95, Doylestown, Pa., died Nov. 26, 2006. Spouse: Clarence F. Derstine (deceased). Parents: John C. and Bertha Godshalk Myers. Children: E. Lois Myers, Freida Myers, Gerald A.; two grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 2 at Doylestown Mennonite Church.

Ediger, Albert M., 91, Buhler, Kan., died Jan. 12. Spouse: Lydia Schmidt Ediger. Parents: David J. and Annie Martens Ediger. Children: LaVon, Byron, Glen; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 15 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Freed, Allen B., 80, Telford, Pa., died Jan. 11. Spouse: Hanna Landis Freed. Parents: Allen and Alverda Brunner Freed. Children: Shirley A. Geiser, Elaine Burns, Nancy E. Beachy, Robert; 13 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 15 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Franconia, Pa.

Frey, Martin, 93, Elmira, Ont., died Dec. 16, 2006. Spouse: Selina Frey (deceased). Parents: Christian and Lydia Brubacher Frey. Children: David, Seleda, Clare, Marv, Aden, Miriam, Barb Draper, Mary Frey Martin; 21 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 19 at Floradale Mennonite Church, Floradale, Ont.

Frey, Mattie Helmuth, 82, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 2. Spouse: Harvey S. Chupp (deceased). Parents: Isaac and Lydia Anne Miller Helmuth. Children: Edwin H., Richard Allen, Donald Ray, Dorothy Ellen Reed, Ruby Darlene Duvall, Caroline Elaine Crowel, Edna Marie Brenneman; 26 grandchildren; 49 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 6 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Frounfelker, Grace Moyer, 86, Bluffton Ohio, died Dec. 9, 2006. Spouse: George Frounfelker (deceased). Parents: Tobias and Ella Moyer. Funeral: Jan. 6 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Gundy, Frances Ramseyer, 87, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 28, 2006. Spouse: Donald G. Gundy (deceased). Parents: Alvin and Mary Ellen Schrock Ramseyer. Children: Larry, George, Ralph, Duane; 12 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Jan. 14 at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Haddle, Henry, 88, Columbiana, Ohio, died Dec. 28, 2006. Spouse: Genevieve Haddle. Parents: John and Matilda Haddle. Children: Cheryl Lee, Karen Craig, Helen Walker, Richard Craig, Robert Craig; 12 grandchildren, numerous great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 1 at North Lima Mennonite Church, North Lima, Ohio.

Hieser, Marie Lucille, 89, Bloomington, Ill., died Nov. 26, 2006, of cancer. Spouse: Morris C. Hieser (deceased). Parents: I.S. and Hattie Metger Mishler. Children: Harlan, Gary, Hazel Lautzenheiser, Nancy Herron; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 1 at Mennonite Church of Normal, Normal, Ill.

Hershey, Mary Shelley, 95, Cochranville, Pa., died Dec. 25, 2006, of heart failure. Spouse: Leroy B. Hershey (deceased). Parents: E.P. and Mary Wert Shelley. Children: Deborah Waterson Schrock, Larry W; five grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 28 at Hershey Mennonite, Kinzers, Pa.

Hess, Evelyn L. Huber, 87, Lancaster, Pa., died Dec. 24, 2006. Spouse: Melvin E. Hess (deceased). Parents: Enos and Grace Leaman Huber. Children: Kenneth, Melvin, Donald, Richard; 10 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 28 at Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Hoffstetter, Elsie M., 84, Columbus, Ohio, died Dec. 30, 2006. Spouse: Ward C. Hofstetter. Parents: John and Dawn Shaffter Smith. Children: John, Jim, Diane Phelps; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 7 at Orrville Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio.

Hostetler, Clarence A., 98, Kalona, Iowa, died Dec. 21. Spouse: Edna Gascho Hostetler. Spouse: Mary Esh (deceased). Parents: Almon and Ida Troyer Hostetler. Children: Mary Yordy, John, Charlene Marner, Eugene Gascho, Gale Gascho; 15 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 28 at East Union Mennonite, Kalona.

Hostetler, Norma E., 84, West Liberty, Ohio, died Dec. 14, 2006. Parents: Stephen and Mamie Byler Hostetler. Funeral: Dec. 18 at Bethel Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Jantz, Leota Kay, 62, Ritzville, Wash., died Dec. 7, 2006, of complications from pneumonia. Spouse: Gary Jantz. Parents: Charles and Juanita Clinesmith. Children: Dione, Jeffrey. Funeral: Dec. 13 at Menno Mennonite Church, Ritzville.

Kanagy, Regina Marner, 57, Centre Hall, Pa., died Jan. 6 of a bacterial infection. Spouse: Ronald Ross Kanagy. Parents: Vaughn and Thelma Smith Shoemaker. Children: Teretha, Vaughn; four grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 13 at Christ Community College, State College, Pa.

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Lehman, Betty J. Rice, 85, Topeka, Ind., died Sept. 11, 2006. Spouse: LaVoid Lehman (deceased). Spouse: Myron Don Wiley (deceased). Parents: Charlie and Cora Belle Inles Rice. Children: Gerry Wiley, Marlene Gohl, Greg, Dexter; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 19 at Topeka Mennonite Church.

Miller, Margaret, 83, Wellman, Iowa, died Jan. 4. Parents: George and Katie E. Miller. Funeral: Jan. 8 at Powell Funeral Home, Wellman.

Moyer, Alice Meyers, 81, Sellersville, Pa., died Dec. 5, 2006. Spouse: Lloyd Y. Moyer (deceased). Parents: Clayton and Mabel M. Meyers. Children: Judith, Daniel, Bradley, Stephen, Jennifer; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 8 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Penner, Anna Lichti, 95, Beatrice, Neb., died Dec. 17, 2006. Spouse: Gerhard H. Penner (deceased). Parents: John and Mary Schroeder Lichti. Children: Judy White, Alan; four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 20 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Reeser, L. Kenneth, 74, LeRoy, Ill., died Dec. 8, 2006. Spouse: Anna Beasley Reeser. Parents: Jake and Lorene Stahly Reeser. Children: Connie Hall, Rhonda Friedrich, Kevin; three grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 12 in Normal, Ill.

Reimer, John A., 98, Chenoa, Ill., died Dec. 8, 2006. Spouse: Lorene Heiser Reimer. Parents: Johann and Katherine R. Reimer. Children: Robert, Jack, John, James, Linda Clemmons, Janice Kiper; 19 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec 12 at Meadows Mennonite Church, Chenoa.

Schmidt, Melva Ries, 88, Marion, S.D., died Jan. 4. Spouse: Alfred G. Schmidt (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Emma Preheim Ries. Children: Marlys Sheriff, Erna, Merton, Kenny; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 8 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Schroeder, Marlene, 79, Newton, Kan., died Jan. 15. Spouse: Lloyd Schroeder. Parents: Jacob and Justina Regier Schroeder. Children: Rhonda Ramsey, Jana, Ardie Goering; three grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 20 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Schulz, Carl G., 88, Swink, Colo., died Jan. 15. Spouse: Marie Schulz. Parents: Henry and Elsie Roeder Schulz. Children: Alvin, David, Jean Hadaway; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 20 at Peacock-Larsen Funeral Home, La Junta, Colo.

Senner, Robert William, 94, Lawrence, Kan., died Dec. 17, 2006. Spouse: Rachel Epp Senner. Parents: William and Elizabeth Graber Senner. Children: John, Rachel VanWingen, Roberta Hofer, Stan; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 6 at Salem Mennonite, Freeman, S.D.

Styer, Abraham S., 84, Souderton, Pa., died Nov. 30, 2006. Spouse: Anna Marie Detweiler Styer (deceased). Parents: Alvin and Martha Swartley Styer. Children: Jack A., Barry L., A. Darlene Boyle, Donna L. Thomas; four grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 6 Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Suter, Daniel B., 86, Harrisonburg, Va., died Dec. 24, 2006. Spouse: Grace Fisher Suter (deceased). Parents: J. Early and Pearl Blosser Suter. Children: Jan Showalter, David R., Mary Louise Tierney, Daniel Bernard; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 26 at Strite Auditorium, Virginia Mennonite Retirement Center, Harrisonburg.

Umble, Blanche Buckwalter, 87, Atglen, Pa., died Jan. 2 of coronary artery disease. Spouse: Willis D. Umble (deceased). Parents: Park and Malinda Smoker Buckwalter. Children: Robert, Susan Eby, Patricia Townsend; 15 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 5 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen.

Weaver, Velma B. Bomberger, 72, Manheim, Pa., died Jan. 3. Spouse: Paul M. Weaver. Parents: Homer and Naomi Bomberger. Children: Tina M. Wenger, Jeffery L., Jay Robert; 10 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 8 at Erb Mennonite Church, Lititz, Pa.

Widmer, Gladys Catherine, 91, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 3, 2006. Parents: Daniel and Mary Graber Widmer. Funeral: Dec. 7 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Yoder, Marion Tex, 75, Kalona, Iowa, died Jan. 14. Spouse: Doris Reber Yoder. Parents: Willis G. and Elizabeth Ann Bender Yoder. Children: Marla, Mary, June, Julie, Morgan. Funeral: Jan. 18 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Zehr, Anna I. Birky, 86, Fort Dodge, Iowa, died Nov. 7, 2006, of cancer. Spouse: Leland Zehr. Parents: Simon and Lena Greiser Birky. Children: Hal, Carolyn Uhlenbrock, Judy Heinze; 10 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 10 at Evangelical Mennonite Church, Fort Dodge.

Zehr, Bertha M. Reedy, 100, Eureka, Ill., died Dec. 25, 2006. Spouse: Albert R. Zehr (deceased). Parents: Peter and Susan Christophel Reedy. Children: Norma Schrock, Carl, Loren, David; 18 grandchildren; 41 great-grandchildren; seven great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 28 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

Zoll, B. Beatrice, 74, Ephrata, Pa., died Dec. 30, 2006. Parents: Harvey and Lena Weber Zoll. Funeral: Jan. 3 at Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

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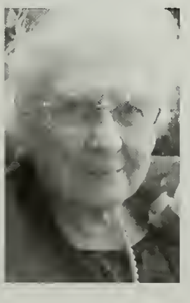

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***Full-time pastoral team leader*: Milverton Mennonite Fellowship** is a rural congregation on the edge of Milverton, approximately 40 minutes west of Kitchener/Waterloo. We are a congregation of varying ages, with an average attendance of 120 people. Our congregation places high value on worship, being Spirit led, prayer, missions (local and foreign). We seek a pastor who has gifts in the areas of team leadership, preaching, developing lay ministry, mission/evangelism, church growth. Position is available early summer. Reply in confidence by March 1 to: Muriel Bechtel, Conference Minister, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, 4489 King St. E., Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2.

***Dean of students*—Rosedale Bible College**, an accredited two-year college in central Ohio operated by the Conservative Mennonite Conference (CMC), is seeking candidates for the position of dean of students, to begin in August 2007. The dean of students oversees the nonacademic elements of the student experience, including student activities, dorm life, community service, chapel programs, student nurture and spiritual development. The dean is also a member of the college's Administrative Council and will be expected to teach part-time. The ideal candidate will be a Christian who is in agreement with the CMC statements of faith, has proven leadership and ministry experience and possesses (or is willing to complete within two years) at least a master's degree in a field relevant to the college's curriculum. Inquiries, resumés and nominations should be sent by March 15 to: President Dan Ziegler, Rosedale Bible College, 2270 Rosedale Rd, Irwin, OH 43029 or to dziegler@rosedale.edu (740-857-1311).

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks four ***event pastors***, two male and two female, for !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth. The position is full-time for one of two time periods: June 7-June 30 or July 6-July 28, with several additional days of preparation. Pastors accompany the high school participants for the 18-day group experience. Qualifications include experience as a congregational pastor and working with youth; ability to nurture youth through times of spiritual, intellectual and emotional growth; creativity in styles of worship, prayer and spiritual disciplines; knowledge of and commitment to the Anabaptist/Mennonite faith; and an undergraduate degree with additional seminary education preferred. Responsibilities include assisting in preparations, leading and directing worship and discussions, and being physically, emotionally and mentally present with youth. To apply, send resumé and letter of application by Feb. 28 to Andy Brubacher Kaethler, !Explore Director, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, andybk@ambs.edu. A complete job description is available on the AMBS Web site: www.ambs.edu/employment/event-pastor.

Hesston College seeks a ***resident director*** for men's residence hall. A member of the student life team, the resident director provides leadership and oversight for operation of Hesston College's primary men's dormitory, which houses up to 138 students. Resident director is a full-time position during the school year, with summers off. The successful candidate will be a role model and mentor for students; select, train and supervise student staff and assist in enforcement of campus lifestyle standards. Qualifications include strong Christian faith, commitment to the Mennonite church and to the mission of Hesston College, leadership ability, and listening and relational skills. Bachelor's degree or higher preferred. Apply by resumé to Lamar Roth, Dean of Students, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; email lamarr@hesston.edu or call 620-327-8235 for information. Review of applicants will begin March 1 and continue until the position is filled. EOE.

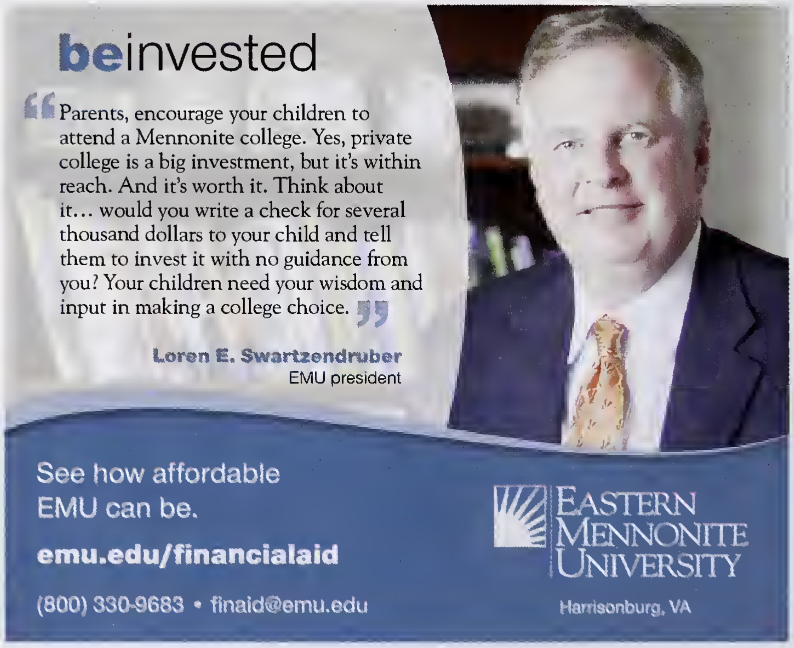
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a ***registrar***, beginning May 1. The position is 80 percent FTE. This person will maintain all academic records for the seminary, monitor student progress, manage class schedules, provide statistical reports and assist students with registration. Qualifications include skills in administration, ability to work with people, familiarity with higher education systems, knowledge of relational database management, strong computer skills and a bachelor's degree (master's degree preferred). Women, members of racial and ethnic groups, and members of other underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. To apply, send a letter of application, curriculum vitae and three references by Feb. 16 to Loren L. Johns, academic dean, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, or ljohns@ambs.edu. See the job description at www.ambs.edu/employment/registrar.

Grief, Spirituality and Sexuality: Life After Losing a Spouse, March 9-11, **Laurelville Mennonite Church Center**, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. A retreat for widowed people, their friends, caregivers, pastors and counselors. Rachel Nafziger Hartzler, pastor and author, keynote presenter. Sessions will focus on loss, personal and corporate lament, spirituality and sexuality. Contact: Erin Clymer, erin@laurelville.org, 800-839-1021, Laurelville.org.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a ***full-time director of admissions***, beginning July 1 or when available. This person will develop, implement and monitor an overall strategy for recruitment of students for AMBS programs and oversee the director of financial aid. Qualifications include Christian commitment and passion for the mission of the Mennonite church, ability to communicate well and relate well to others, strong attention to details, proven supervisory and organizational skills, ability to think strategically and availability to travel 40-50 percent. Women and members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. To apply, send a resumé, three references and letter of application by April 1, 2007, to Ron Ringenberg, vice president, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, or rringenb@ambs.edu. See the job description at www.ambs.edu/employment/director-admissions.

Employment opportunity for Christian couple: **Lakewood Retreat**, Brooksville, Fla., seeks ***full-time camp administrator*** to provide leadership for overall operation. The successful candidates will have the following skills: Christian, Mennonite or related Anabaptist camp administration experience desired, appreciation for outdoors, people skills, business and financial knowledge, marketing and public relations skills, computer skills. The job includes relating to sponsoring Mennonite churches and marketing the 114-acre camp/retreat with overnight facilities for families and special interest groups up to 250 people. Lakewood's purpose is "sharing God's love through service by providing a setting to experience Jesus Christ." Interested people may send their resumé to search committee chair, Arthur Wise, 5520 Antoinette St., Sarasota, FL 34232, email ArthurCWise@aol.com, phone 941-377-3104.

English conversation teachers needed. **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.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MCC urgent opening: ***East Coast director***, Akron, Pa. Needed May 1. Must possess strong organizational and leadership skills. Must embrace Anabaptist faith acceptable to the diverse MCC constituency; be able to build and coordinate a staff team of 30-40 individuals and relate to urban and suburban/rural constituency. Contact Becky Stahly, rss@mcc.org, or call 717-859-1151 for job description and further information. Letter of interest and resumé should be sent by Feb. 15.

Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., is looking for a ***program coordinator*** to plan, market and run youth through adult programs with program director. Full-time plus some weekends. Successful candidate will be effective communicator, have eye for detail and be committed to sustainability, Christian living and community building. Information: Laurelville.org, erin@laurelville.org.

Farming with Values that Last 2007: Standing on Common Ground, Feb 23-25, **Laurelville Mennonite Church Center**, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. Join people of faith gathering to share experiences and celebrate the opportunities within community-based sustainable agriculture. Workshops, worship, commercial exhibits, music, storytelling. Frederick Kirschenmann, Distinguished Fellow of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University, keynote speaker. Workshops on dairy farming, new farming initiatives, farming practices and community. Contact: Erin Clymer, erin@laurelville.org, 800-839-1021, www.laurelville.org.

Goshen College is inviting applications for a ***full-time tenure-track position*** in the biology department. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Bethel College seeks an ***associate director of development***. Responsibilities include identification and cultivation of donor prospects and assistance with the college's annual and capital funds. Qualifications: interpersonal, public presentation, organizational and technology skills; self-direction; willingness and ability to travel; familiarity with Bethel constituency; strong advocacy for Bethel College; experience in or closely related to development or advancement. Submit resumé and cover letter to Sondra Koontz, Vice President of Advancement, Bethel College, 300 E. 27th, North Newton, KS 67117 or email skoontz@bethelks.edu. Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action Employer. Women and minorities are particularly encouraged to apply.

Executive director needed for **Black Rock Retreat**, Lancaster, Pa. Position provides organization-wide leadership for 60-room conference center, summer camp, outdoor education and elder hostel programs. Submit resumé to: Dan Hess, LMA Consulting Group, Fax 717-509-8879 or email info@LMAsystems.com.

Lititz Area Mennonite School, a K-8 Christian school in Lititz, Pa., serving 305 students, is looking for a ***head administrator*** for the 2007-2008 school year. The position requires great organizational and managerial skill as well as academic knowledge and a vision for educational excellence. Candidate must have a passion for Christian education and excellent communication and relational skills. Leadership in Christian school administration is a plus. Bachelor's degree in school administration or education required, preferably a master's degree. Send inquiry or resumé to: Matt Burkholder, Search Committee Coordinator, Lititz Area Mennonite School, 1050 East Newport Road, Lititz, PA 17543; 717-626-9551, email lamsoff@dejazzd.com.

Frazer (Pa.) Mennonite Church, located 25 miles west of Philadelphia, is seeking a ***full-time pastor***. Frazer is a suburban congregation of 125 members that desires an experienced pastor who is gifted in preaching and teaching and who shares our vision for community outreach, peace and justice ministries and active lay leadership. Please visit frazermennonite.org or contact Larry Massanari at 610-524-8332 or lmassanari@aol.com.

Pastors' Family Weekend at **Spruce Lake Retreat**, March 16-18: Dr. Loren E. Swartzendruber, president of Eastern Mennonite University, and Jep Hostetler (who believes humor promotes health!) will lead this special retreat for pastors and their families. Call 800-822-7505. (Located in Pocono Mts., northeast Pennsylvania, www.sprucelake.org.)

Director for Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee: The Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA is looking for a dynamic leader to serve as full-time director beginning summer 2007. The director should have a passion for history and Mennonite stories, be a good communicator, have the desire and energy to make friends and continue strong relationships among the constituents of the Historical Committee, while communicating its mission. The director's duties include overseeing the work of the archives of Mennonite Church USA in Goshen, Ind., and North Newton, Kan. Some travel is necessary. Director may work out of either Goshen or North Newton office. Contact Shelley Buller, Mennonite Church USA Leadership (ShelleyB@MennoniteUSA.org or 866-866-2872) for an application and job description. Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership is an equal opportunity employer and encourages women and racial/ethnic people to apply for employment.

Eastern Mennonite School (K-12), located in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley in Harrisonburg, Va., is in the search process for two key positions: ***high school teacher—U.S. history and government***—beginning in Fall 2007 and ***director of development***. This person will nurture community relationships and provide supervisory leadership for the fund-raising, admissions, communications and marketing staff. Desirable candidates will value church relationships, are successful fund-raisers, enjoy youth, create positive first impressions, are energetic, optimistic, encouraging and articulate in spoken and written language. Candidates should be available to begin employment between January and July 2007. Successful candidates will share a passion for Anabaptist-Mennonite education in a Christ-centered academic environment. Please express interest to Paul Leaman, Principal, 801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; email leamanp@emhs.net; phone 540-432-4502; www.emhs.net. Eastern Mennonite School offers a competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with experience and is an equal opportunity employer.

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Things are getting complicated in this nest

Michael A. King is pastor of Spring Mount (Pa.) Mennonite Church, editor of *DreamSeeker* and dad bird to three birds who appear likely to flit in and out for a while.

Mourn we did, Joan and I, when Oldest, Middle and Youngest Birds left our nest, as I reported in my last column (Oct. 3, 2006). Integrity, however, forces this confession: It's good I wrote that column when I did; I couldn't write it now. Once we got used to the empty nest, we found out (don't read this, Departed Birds) we sometimes liked it. For the first time in 25 years the house was quiet, things stayed mostly clean and scheduling supper was a piece of cake: just consult with one other person or some nights even—amazing—with only yourself.

The bliss of the empty nest was highlighted over the holidays, when we lost it temporarily. The bird overseas couldn't come home, but the other birds, plus varieties of in-law birds, spent whole weeks here. The nest suddenly seemed loud, drowning in dirty dishes and full of birds who wanted worms—or at least Christmas ham.

When are we grown up? When can we claim our adult wisdom and stature?

Around this time Joan pointed out something I'd not focused on, between either mourning or at times sneakily (until now) liking the empty nest: Some birds fly back in. One has this odd notion she'll still live here during holidays and summers when not at college; another suspects she'll spend time here getting her head together after service abroad. And who knows what other dreams of the home nest are in those dear birds' brains. Bottom line: They'll be back. This is frightening.

It's also exciting. After they adjust to the first shock of being used again, our birds-back-in-nest muscles recover. Then we do love having the nest filled with their zest. As the birds report on their lives beyond the nest, we delight in the emerging clarity of their flight plans and the growing strength of their wings. Then when again they leave, the nest feels far too quiet.

Frightening, exciting and unpredictable. When are they really gone? This is getting complicated. And that's the complexity so many families now navigate. Much of this is not new; children have always left nests and at times returned. Yet the oft-remarked fuzziness emerging in our culture regarding when the birds are fully flown seems a newer phenomenon.

Repeatedly Joan and I hear from other Baby Boomers that it wasn't like this for us. To oversimplify, we turned 18, our parents pushed us out of the nest into college or jobs, often not long after 21 we were married, our adult lives had started—and that, very nearly, was that.

Now you never know. They fly away. You think they're gone. Maybe they do, too. Then they want to save money, readjust a flight plan, let parents do wash and change oil a few more years or spend that last stretch at home before their age 30 wedding day. Back in they fly. For a week or two. A month or two. Or years.

Complicated. Bad? Good? Maybe partly bad. Is our culture losing ways of marking what it means to grow up? I wondered this while preparing a sermon on 1 Samuel 2:26 and Luke 2:52. Using almost the same words, they report that Samuel or Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, in favor with God and people. The focus on growth caught my attention. Like Samuel or Jesus we are all created, if not as memorably, to grow. And one aspect of growth has traditionally been to grow up, to become an adult. But what does that look like today? When are we grown up? When can we claim our adult wisdom and stature? As birds flit in and out of nests often throughout their 20s and later, many of us, whether children or parents, are not entirely sure.

But maybe this is partly a good development. I suspect that at least for now we need life in the nest to be flexible. Life spans are lengthening. I forget what 50 has become—the new 30? Or did I see somewhere that now it's the new 20? We aging ones are in our own time of trying to understand what it means to grow up when we may or may not retire at 65 and are told we can have a third or seventh or 15th career starting at 75. Or is it 85?

If even their parents and grandparents are rethinking what life phases they must navigate and how, 18- to 30-somethings deserve space to do the same. I look forward to our exploring together this strange new world of evolving life stages. Just release me to be sad when you leave and sad when you come back, and to laugh when you leave and to sweep you into my arms when you return—here in this unsettling and wonderful future we're creating together.

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

RESOURCES

Jesus Today: A Spirituality of Radical Freedom by Albert Nolan (Orbis Books, 2006, $16) focuses on Jesus' own spirituality and how that is relevant today. It looks at the signs of our times, Jesus' spirituality, personal transformation and oneness with God and all creation.

Mystical Journey: An Autobiography by William Johnston (Orbis Books, 2006, $20) moves from a staunch Catholic upbringing in Belfast to the last 50 years in Tokyo, where Johnston, author of *Christian Zen*, *The Inner Eye of Love* and *Mystical Theology*, is director of Oriental Religions at Sophia University.

Anabaptist Songs in African Hearts: A Global Mennonite History: Africa, edited by John A. Lapp and C. Arnold Snyder (Good Books, 2006, $11.95), is written by Africans, each a church leader or pastor, who write about the emergence and development of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in the countries from which they come.

Testing Faith and Tradition: A Global Mennonite History: Europe, edited by John A. Lapp and C. Arnold Snyder (Good Books, 2006, $11.95), is written by European Mennonite historians and church leaders, who recount the beginning of the Anabaptist movement during the 16th century and how frequent wars since then have strained Mennonite churches, especially when their governments have battled each other. Today the churches are declining in membership but are not without reinvigorated faith and hope.

Through Conflict to Reconciliation, edited by Augustine Meier and Martin Rovers (Novalis, 2006, $39.95), provides expertise for front-line professionals working in the area of conflict resolution. The collection of essays makes the point that conflict resolution takes many shapes and involves different experiences and situations.

Living in New Ways (Mennonite Central Committee, 2006, $6.99) is an 11-minute DVD that shows how MCC has brought hope in relief for victims of Hurricane Katrina, trauma healing and rebuilding in South India, HIV/AIDS education in Uganda and El Salvador and job training in Canada. Purchase at mccstore.org, borrow at mcc.org/catalog.

Mennonites in Texas: The Quiet in the Land by Laura L. Camden and Susan Gaetz Duarte (Texas A&M University Press, 2006, $35) is not exhaustive but a photographic tour of two Texas Mennonite communities: Beachy Amish in Lott and Mennonites in Seminole. It includes 48 duotone photos, plus a map, an index and a bibliography.

My Very First Christmas by Lois Rock, illustrated by Alex Ayliffe (Good Books, 2006, $14.99), includes both a retelling of the traditional Christmas story and folk tales about the Christmas season, for the youngest of readers.

Kabbalah: A Brief Introduction for Christians by Tamar Frankiel (Jewish Lights, 2006, $16.99) demystifies the intricate world of Kabbalah and shows that it is not only for Jewish scholars but for anyone interested in finding the connections between our everyday lives and the spiritual oneness of the universe.

A Field of Voices: Hymns for Worship by James E. Clemens and David Wright (Table Round Press, 2007, $9.95) is available at www.tableroundpress.com. Mary Oyer writes, "The poetry and music work together to create a pace that allows congregations to think as well as feel while they sing."

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS
FOR THEY WILL BE CALLED
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– MATTHEW 5:9
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Everett J. Thomas

The middle church

Members of Mennonite Church USA connect with our denomination first through congregations and then through the area conferences of which their congregations are a part. But apparently we are not highly committed to area conferences. That is a major problem. Without strong links between congregations and denomination, Mennonite Church USA will have trouble functioning as well as it could. There will be even fewer bonds between congregations and, ultimately, between members across the church.

This problem is revealed in a new profile of Mennonite Church USA members (see page 8). The survey included questions about four elements of the church: congregation, area conference, denomination and the broader Christian church. When asked to which part of the church they were the most highly committed, respondents ranked area conferences last.

If area conferences carry such critical roles for denominational strength, why is our commitment to them so low?

Mennonite Church USA leaders have been focused on the plight of area conferences for at least two years. Constituency Leaders Council created a task force last year to look at the role of area conferences in our new denomination. CLC and Executive Board will meet together in March to review the findings and recommendations from the task force (see page 20).

When congregational members think about an area conference—if they consider it at all—they probably know of at least one function vested there: the pastor-placement system. This is a critical task because the choice of ministers usually determines how Anabaptist a congregation will be.

Another function vested in area conferences is the power to establish membership guidelines for congregations wanting to be a part of the denomination. This is also a critical task, especially for those areas of the church that want doctrinal or teaching positions to be consistent among the congregations in their conferences.

Beyond these two powers, conference activity is not uniform. We have 21 area conferences, and no two are alike. Each has its own culture and structure. But it is through these differences that much of our diversity is managed.

To look at it from another side: One of the ways we manage diversity in Mennonite Church USA is through the area conference structure. This happens in several ways.

First, within the area conference, any differences from congregation to congregation are worked out in ways that may be unique to that part of the church. For example, how Western District Conference works out the diversity among its member congregations may be different from how Virginia Mennonite Conference works out its differences.

Second, there is diversity from one conference to another within Mennonite Church USA. In some parts of the church, congregations are located in the same county or city but belong to different conferences. This is not the situation for all congregations, but in many major Mennonite population centers it is a way that diversity from congregation to congregation can be accommodated.

If area conferences—what might be called "the middle church"—carry such critical roles for denominational strength, why is our commitment to them so low?

Mennonite Church USA leaders are moving into what they call a "Six-Year Review" (a process mandated by the Transformation Team and membership guidelines of 2001). This review of our ecclesial structures may provide an opportunity to change some things to help area conferences. What those things are has not been determined, but the review may answer the question.

In the meantime, have a conversation with other members in your congregation and learn whether the findings also represent your congregation's commitment to your area conference. If so, also consider what this low commitment to the middle part of our church will mean long-term for our unity and strength as a young denomination in this country.—*ejt*

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

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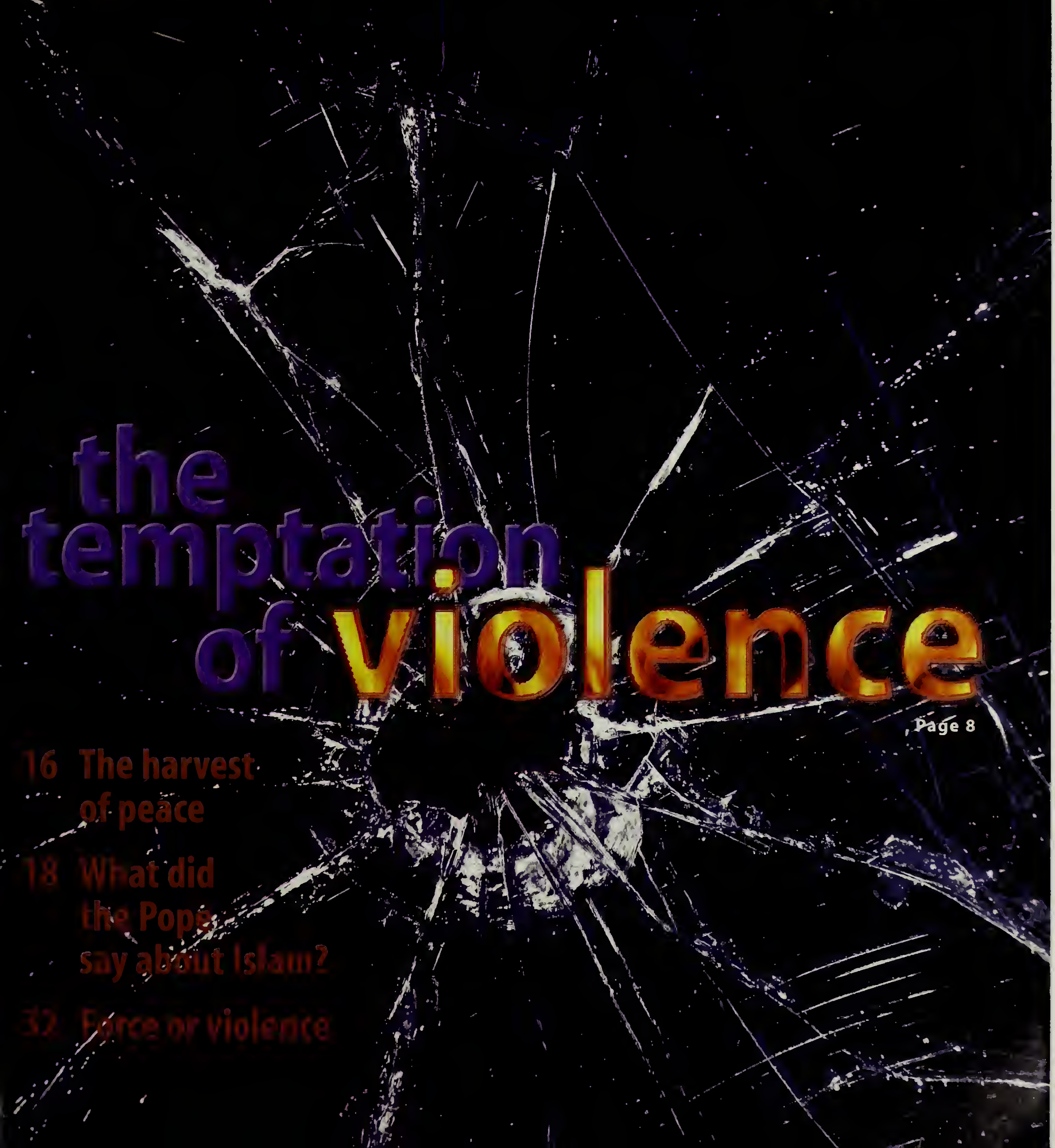
February 20, 2007



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Greed: unbridled desire

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Inheritances have a sneaky way of arousing dormant desires, even among Christians living in a measure of holy contentment. "Who will get the china hutch? Who will get Mom's best quilt? Who will get the antique car? Let's be fair here." When a man in the crowd asked Jesus for help in a fair distribution of his inheritance, Jesus ignored the request and told a story (Luke 12).

A man already doing well experienced a windfall harvest. It was more than his granary could handle. He decided to build big bins and storage sheds, which sounds like a prudent plan.

Jesus calls it greed. Greed is unbridled desire—always wanting more for myself and never having enough. Another word for this sin is avarice, which means hanging on to what I don't need. A more familiar word is hoarding. The landowner in Jesus' story was hoarding God's blessing for himself. He never considered that maybe God had given him this raise or this bonus or this windfall appreciation of stock so that he could help another person or underwrite kingdom work.

Possessions greed is implied in Jesus' statement in Luke 12:15 (NIV): "A [person's] life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Having ruined my navy blue pair of walking shorts with Clorox, I went to the store to get a new pair. I left the store with two pairs of shorts and five new summer shirts. I was having a greed attack and did not even know it. On the way home I thought, How will I explain this to my wife? I wasn't even thinking about God.

My head cleared when I opened my closet the next morning. How many shirts do I need? This is ridiculous. More shirts will not make me happier. I was recovering from my greed attack. I was repenting of avarice. I took out five shirts that went to The Et Cetera Shop. I took back three shirts and a pair of shorts to the store. More shirts, shoes, tools or toys will not make me happier.

Pleasure is another kind of greed. Mountain climbing, paragliding, wind surfing, bungee jumping, glacier skiing—we live in a culture greedy for excitement and pleasure. Many are addicted to the adrenaline high of sports.

Jesus' comments were actually addressed to the older end of the age spectrum. Purposeful, kingdom-committed retirement is not about taking life easy. Retirement is an opportunity to serve God in new ways.

Power is a third kind of greed. Who has the most songs on their iPod? Who has the most gigabytes in their computer? Who has the most horsepower in their car or tractor? Acquisitions, mergers and hostile takeovers aren't so much about money as power.

How do we overcome greed?

Do a reality check. How much is enough? Say, I have enough CDs. I have enough shirts. I have enough power tools. I have enough lipsticks. I have enough quilting fabric. I have enough retirement savings. I have enough net worth. I have enough income. Someday God will say, "Tonight you die. And your barnful of goods—who gets it?"

Attack greed with giving. Jesus ends the story by calling us to be "rich toward God." Giving our money to God is the opposite of greed. It is the opposite of unending accumulation. Giving is the completion of the repentant turnaround.

Attack greed with giving to the Lord. The Apostle Paul tells Timothy to teach people with incomes "to do good, to be rich in good works, generous and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life" (1 Timothy 6:18-19).

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Making money on violence

In Iraq, the United States is currently spending one million taxpayer dollars every four minutes. Tremendous fortunes are made in every war. So war is popular with the military-industrial complex: investors, the elite, right-wing Christians, the Pentagon, the CIA, politicians, defense industries and people who need the work. Obscene expenditures are made for weapons research and development. Weapons manufacturers thrive and become more deeply entrenched every year. The economy booms—on borrowed money.

The U.S. debt, now approaching a crippling $9 trillion (almost $29,000 for each U.S. citizen), is ballooning because of war preparations and the shameful mass slaughter of innocent civilians—including women and children—in Iraq and Afghanistan. The wealthy financiers and investors are profiting handsomely from the carnage, making huge profits from loans that someone else will have to pay back.

Violence of all types is epidemic, especially the violence of poverty and racism. Gun violence, from homicide to suicide, is also epidemic. Those making obscene profits in the weapons industry have sabotaged even the most modest handgun and assault rifle controls—all the while flooding America and the world with increasingly lethal weapons. Is it too late to stop this carnage? How are our elected representatives voting on these matters?—*Harold A. Penner, Akron, Pa.*

Abandoning dialogue is loss for all

A recent letter in Readers Say suggested that Mennonites ought to abandon dialogue with the Catholic church in light of Catholics' practice of infant baptism and the sexual abuse of children by Catholic priests (Readers Say, Dec. 19, 2006). I can think of no more heinous act than the rape of children. My stomach churns at the damage done and failed responses. However, abandoning contact with all institutions whose members commit such atrocities would also require divorce from the Boy Scouts, public schools and some Mennonite congregations. Doing so, we all lose.

Jesus called us to unity in faith and dialogue benefits all. Catholics have much to learn from Anabaptists, such as discipleship, service and nonviolence. Many Anabaptists have learned from Catholics as well, appreciating sacramental theology and the integration of faith and reason. Saying, "No use talking; we have differences" leads to violence, not reconciliation. Jesus came to call sinners—all sinners—including Catholic and Mennonite sinners. We are all called to holiness: service, worship, forgiveness, accountability and evangelism.

As the parents of a dual-denominational family—Mennonite and Catholic—we can attest personally to the benefits of participation in both traditions, which is why we are raising our son as a member of both churches.—*Rex Rempel and Lenae Nofziger, Kirkland, Wash.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Several temptation articles in this issue coincide with the Gospel reading (Luke 4:1-13) for Feb. 25, which is the first Sunday in Lent. The articles are on pages 8, 12 and 14. A most compelling piece about violence, however, is the poem on page 11. Even if you do not regularly dwell on the poetry we publish, take some time to slowly read and contemplate the message about violence in this vignette offered by Fred Bahnson. This, too, is a Lenten message. In the Grace and Truth column (page 2), Clarence Rempel returns to his series on the Seven Deadly Sins—in time for the beginning of Lent. In the news section we begin Anna Groff's exclusive coverage of the Mennonite Church USA delegation visit to Congolese churches (page 19). We will have additional coverage from this visit in our March 6 and March 20 issues.—*Editor*

A more welcoming spirit?

I have been reading announcements about planning for Mennonite Church USA's San José 2007 convention that will be held this summer. It sounds like a special experience for those who will be able to attend, and I hope no one will be disappointed. I am wondering if there will be any group of believers who will not be welcome. I recall that in the past the Brethren-Mennonite Council (that represents concerns of those with nonheterosexual orientation) was not given a space "at the table." Perhaps this year there will be a more welcoming spirit as the planning goes on.—*Ruby Lehman, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Editor's note: In a Jan. 20 executive session, Executive Board members discussed options for dealing with controversial issues at delegate assemblies. The Executive Board will return to the topic at its March 22-24 meeting.

Better to rent than build

I noted in the Dec. 19, 2006, News Digest that Mennonite Church USA offices in Elkhart, Ind., have been moved to a rented building because of water damage. I don't claim any business expertise, but somehow this move seems more consistent with the claims of Mennonites to seek to follow Christ in every aspect of our lives than building a multimillion-dollar office building. After all, Jesus Christ, our King, was born in a barn and depended for food and lodging on the kindness of others. What does that mean for us?—*Elvina Neufeld Martens, Goshen, Ind.*

Buy books too

Carol Bucher Bixler (Readers Say, Jan. 2) suggests "using libraries instead of buying books." I applaud the purchase of books for libraries, especially church libraries. But I also encourage investment in good books by individuals. Both practices help Christian authors, publishers and bookstores remain viable.—*Paul M. Schrock, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Christian Zionism

Re Everett J. Thomas' editorial "Shattering the Silent Night" (Dec. 19, 2006): In my time in the church, we were taught about the connection of the Jews with the land of Israel—a promise that will be fulfilled. Scripture directs us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, not as a pagan capital but as a center for God's chosen people.

I would probably agree that the extreme or radical elements are generally not the elements to build a doctrine on, but why is Thomas rejecting a biblical understanding on the basis of extremes? Is it not true that many rejected the early Anabaptist movement on the basis of the extremist view of religion by the Münsterites? Have we, therefore, rejected the doctrines of the Anabaptists?

The editorial also suggests that Christian Zionism is the problem in the Middle East; I am assuming that Thomas has read of the disruption and harassment to Christians in the Palestinian Authority territory following the return of lands from Israel to Palestinian control. Why are we silent on this aspect of justice in our world?

Scripture suggests that many will turn against Israel, but I have yet to find that it says the majority will be correct in their understanding.—*Ken Albrecht, Millbank, Ont.*

Early Christians opposed abortion

Jonathan Andreas points out that there is no mention in the canonical Scripture of abortion (Readers Say, Jan. 2). He is correct. However, it was certainly in the minds of the early church leaders. The issue is documented in the "Doctrina," probably written shortly after the letters of Paul. It is expanded in the "Didache," written somewhat later. In both the wording is clear: "You shall not murder a child by abortion or kill one when born" (Goodspeed translation).

This was clearly the position of the early church and applied to all Christians. Whether they made any attempt to change the behavior of the secular society is not recorded.

I believe all Christians are still required to oppose abortion. Having said that, I will add that outlawing it will not work. If we reverse Roe v. Wade, we will be disappointed in the results. It will fail in the same way that prohibition of alcohol failed. Our task should be work to prevent unwanted pregnancies and to try to assure that every child born ends up in a loving family.—*Carl D. Hyde, Yellow Springs, Ohio*

Paper change for *The Mennonite*

I am certain that decisions like moving to a higher-gloss paper (or any change for that matter) for a periodical like *The Mennonite* are fraught with naysayers. I don't have all the information and would be interested in what is behind the need to move toward higher gloss. My concern is largely environmental. The problem is I don't think I can recycle *The Mennonite* now that it is joining the ranks of higher gloss paper.—*Fred Oberholtzer, Gettysburg, Pa.*

Editor's note: We switched to a paper with a heavier coating because it better holds ink in place and makes the type easier to read. This paper includes post-consumer waste and is recyclable. We continue to use environmentally friendly soy-based ink.

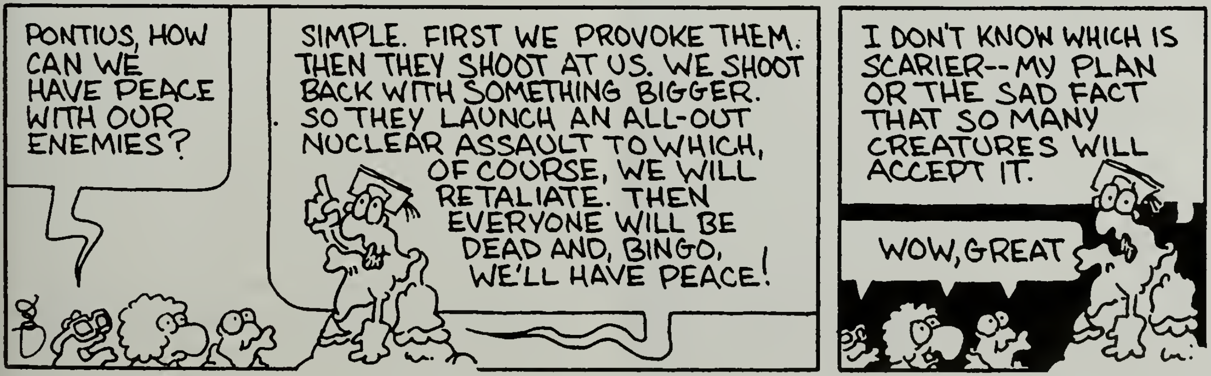
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Violence brings about good: (68 votes)

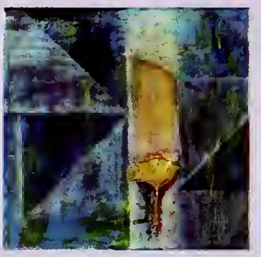
- ○ Never (54%)
- ○ Rarely (29%)
- ○ Sometimes (16%)
- ○ Not sure (0%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


PONTIUS, HOW CAN WE HAVE PEACE WITH OUR ENEMIES?
SIMPLE. FIRST WE PROVOKE THEM. THEN THEY SHOOT AT US. WE SHOOT BACK WITH SOMETHING BIGGER. SO THEY LAUNCH AN ALL-OUT NUCLEAR ASSAULT TO WHICH, OF COURSE, WE WILL RETALIATE. THEN EVERYONE WILL BE DEAD AND, BINGO, WE'LL HAVE PEACE!
I DON'T KNOW WHICH IS SCARIER--MY PLAN OR THE SAD FACT THAT SO MANY CREATURES WILL ACCEPT IT.
WOW, GREAT

IN BRIEF



Goshen alumni display their art

Goshen (Ind.) College alumni artists Jennifer Rohrer, a 1993 graduate, and Mark Nafziger, a 1981 graduate, are displaying their paintings, photo collages and ceramics in Goshen's Hershberger Art Gallery from Feb. 4 to March 14. Rohrer is an artist and educator from Cleveland Heights, Ohio, and Nafziger is a self-employed potter working at Sauder Village in Archbold, Ohio. Above is Rohrer's acrylic "The Space Between." —*Goshen College*

MCC continues work in Lebanon

Despite political instability, tension and ongoing unrest, Mennonite Central Committee Lebanon and its 12 partner organizations continue to provide much-needed crisis intervention services and plan new, long-term development projects, says MCC's representative, Ken Seitz. MCC usually supports about 15 projects in Lebanon but supports 35. Short-term projects started after the conflict in 2006 include mobile health clinics, children and youth programs, trauma healing and cluster bomb awareness. —*MCC*

Women in ministry 'contented ... as men'

PARNELL, Iowa—Diane Zaerr Brenneman, Mennonite Church USA denominational minister who manages the placement process for pastors, reports that women in ministry have less ambiguity about their roles than women pastors did 13 years ago, according to a 2006 survey sponsored by her office and to be released this month.

"[Women] are just as contented with their pastorates as men," Brenneman says. "The three biggest challenges we discovered for women pastors are structural and attitudinal gender inequalities, balancing ministry and family roles, and women finding appropriate leadership and ministry styles."

Pam Nath, professor of psychology at Bluffton (Ohio) University, conducted the survey for Executive Leadership under the auspices of a Lily grant.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Mennonite volunteers help homeless women

DENVER—DEO (Discipleship, Encounter, Outreach) participant Kim Driedger of Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite Church sorts clothes at The Gathering Place, Denver's only day shelter for homeless women and children. Several times each month, women are invited to help themselves to donated clothing.

With the typical decrease in donations after the holidays, The Gathering Place was short on warm clothes—boots, hats and scarves. Lucia Ishikawa, volunteer resources manager, says Denver's exceptionally snowy weather this winter has been extra difficult for the 300 clients they serve.

Serving with Driedger in Denver this year are Mary Goering of First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan., and Jessica Penner of Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church, Harper, Kan.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Chuck Goertz

Helping hands for a new congregation in Miami

Jim Gingerich (center), coordinator of Mennonite Men, and Dave Bergen (right), executive secretary of formation for Mennonite Church Canada, present a check for $50,000 to Ducois Forestalm, pastor of Unity Pentecostal Church of God-Miami, a Haitian congregation and a member of Southeast Mennonite Conference. The grant comes from JoinHands, Mennonite Men's church-building program, which has given about $1.3 million in grants since 1985 to 46 new congregations for building projects.—*Gordon Houser*

Pastors lead drive to rebuild parish

PORT SULPHUR, La.—Even though residents are slow to come back to Plaquemines Parish, several pastors in the area are proceeding with rebuilding their church structures.

The first was George Reno, 72, of Lighthouse Fellowship Mennonite Church in Buras. The storm tore down the front doors, blasted the privacy wall and scattered the hymnbooks and pews about the newly laid linoleum tile floor. A sidewall supporting the roof was also damaged, and the roof trusses broke in several places.

When Reno first saw the damage and debris, he felt the place would have to be demolished. But when Mennonite Disaster Service Gulf Coast coordinator Jerry Klassen visited Reno, he inspected the structure and thought otherwise. He proposed to Reno that MDS repair the structure in return for using it to accommodate MDS volunteer teams.

Reno, who lost his house and still lives in a trailer, accepted. Since then, countless volunteers from MDS and other groups have used the building.

Likewise, Teddy Turner, pastor of an African American church, called for help but declared that if he had to he would rebuild his church on his own until it was done.

Faith Temple, supported by Feed My Sheep ministries has built a modern dome, tent-like structure and is proceeding with plans to expand and augment their facilities.

Kerry Eidse, MDS project director in Plaquemines Parish, says, "I have never seen such strong leadership in pastors."—*MDS*

CPT trainees arrested supporting detainees

CHICAGO—At 4:30 p.m. on Jan. 11, Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) volunteers entered the U.S. federal courthouse in downtown Chicago to call for an end to indefinite detention and inhumane treatment of detainees at Guantanamo.

January 11 marked the fifth anniversary of the U.S. military bringing the first detainees to the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Currently 435 men are incarcerated there, many of whom have been there for five years without charge or access to legal counsel. International human rights organizations and the United

HERMAN BUBBERT LODGE
PROSPE SLED

Melanie Zuercher

sliding away

nel College's ageless fictional prankster, Herman Bubbert, not been heard from in a while, but when North Newton, ., got six inches of snow Jan. 20, Herman couldn't resist. He rfaced and, with the help of some Bethel students, creat- Mount Menno Simons" on the steps of the Administration ding, renamed "Herman Bubbert Lodge"—just in time to come a group of prospective students visiting the campus 22. The builders of the toboggan run left a section of the s clear for access. Not only students took a spin on the es—President Barry C. Bartel, right, and executive vice sident for institutional development John Sheriff gave it a rl, too.—*Bethel College*

Nations have called for its immediate closure due to grave human rights abuses.

CPT trainees Garland Robertson and Michael McMurray delivered a writ of habeas corpus on behalf of the detainees—asking that they be allowed to hear the charges against them—to Chief Justice James F. Holderman. Meanwhile, CPT trainees John Heid, Eileen Hanson, Sarah Shirk, Joe Mueller, Sean O'Neill and CPT reservist Cassandra Dixon, knelt in silence, dressed in orange jumpsuits and hooded like the prisoners at Guantanamo. Five other local supporters brought a banner saying, "Charge them or release them."

In an unprecedented move, Holderman came down to the lobby of the courthouse to speak with the group. He declined to act on the writs, saying the cases were outside his jurisdiction. He recommended addressing the U.S. Federal Court in Washington and instructed federal marshals to allow the group to remain until 5 p.m., when the building would close.

At 5 p.m., officers of the Federal Protective Service ordered the group to leave and threatened arrest. The group said they would remain in the courthouse until Guantanamo closed down. Officers made arrests, removing the hoods and handcuffing each in turn. The Chicago police took custody of them and held them overnight.

The next morning, during their arraignment, their cases were dismissed. Dixon, Shirk and O'Neill each received federal citation for trespassing. They are to be arraigned in March.—*CPT*

SCC reduces conference minister position

HESSTON, Kan.—With declining income from South Central Conference congregations as well as the reduced number of churches served by its conference minister, SCC's executive committee decided to change the position of conference minister from full-time to half-time or less. Changes in its agreement with Western District Conference meant SCC's conference minister is no longer serving WDC churches in Oklahoma.

Based on the executive committee's decision, conference minister Robert Nolt resigned in December. Conrado Hinojosa, retired associate conference minister, is serving as interim conference minister.—*South Central Conference*

Authors talk to LMS about reading, writing

LANCASTER, Pa.—On Jan. 25, authors Dave and Neta Jackson of Evanston, Ill., shared their passion for writing at the Locust Grove and Kraybill campuses of Lancaster Mennonite School (K-8).

The Jacksons' visit kicked off the two campuses' midwinter emphasis on reading and writing. Both campuses observe Drop Everything And Read (D.E.A.R.), a special reading celebration to encourage families to make reading together daily a family priority.

The husband-wife team, who have coauthored more than 100 books, introduced students to the Hero Tales, a four-volume series of true stories for ages 6-12 on important historic Christian heroes and heroines, such as Florence Nightingale, C.S. Lewis, Mother Teresa, Billy Graham and John Wesley. With the younger elementary students they shared actual stories they have written, and with the older students they shared more in-depth about the writing process. Dave talked about his progression from a slow reader and poor speller to a college journalist who enjoyed writing. Neta began writing at a younger age, winning a national writing contest while a senior in high school. The authors had a question-and-answer time at the end of each presentation.—*LMS*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Iraq witness to be held March 15-17

Christian Peace Witness for Iraq, to be held March 15-17 in Washington, is a Christian, nonviolent witness against the war in Iraq and in support of ending the occupation, bringing U.S. troops home, rebuilding Iraq, saying no to torture and yes to justice. The witness is grounded in worship, beginning at the Washington National Cathedral March 16, followed by a procession to the White House for a late-night prayer vigil against the war. Some people may choose to be arrested during the vigil. The entire witness will be positive in tone, respectful of those in authority and clear about the Christian obligation to stand against this kind of violence. Mennonite Church USA Peace and Justice Support Network will meet March 17. For more information, see www.ChristianPeaceWitness.org.—*Susan Mark Landis*

Floods ravage Jakarta, Indonesia

Heavy rains Feb. 1-2 caused severe flooding in Jakarta, Indonesia, marooning many people in their homes and work places. Water rose to a height of nearly four meters in some parts of the city, much of which lies below sea level. One Mennonite church immediately began organizing donations of clothes, food and water for flood victims at other Mennonite churches and in neighboring areas.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Defeating the temptat

Lessons from Matthew 4:1-11

by Susan Mark Landis

Christian discipleship means doing as Jesus did, but spending 40 days in primitive, desert living conditions, and fasting besides, does not appeal to me at all. What does fascinate me about Matthew 4:1-11 is the basis of the three temptations and how they all turn up again in Jesus' ministry.

In the midst of Jesus' desert deprivation comes the devil, defiantly challenging Jesus' understanding of his identity and mission. Jesus resists three temptations: to abuse power, dominate nations or resort to redemptive violence. Each of these temptations was a way Jesus could have been Messiah. Each of these was a way people lead in human societies. But what kind of Messiah was God calling Jesus to be? Even after the devil left, and the angels ministered to Jesus, the temptation to be a power-hungry Messiah remained. Jesus faced these same three temptations later in his ministry.

The first temptation is to override the economic injustices of the day by feeding the hungry from bread made from stones, by using power to change pebbles rather than hearts, by changing a landscape rather than inviting people to live in such a way that all have enough to eat. And later, in John 6, after Jesus feeds the 5,000, we see that the crowd offered him exactly that temptation. They wanted to make him king, the king who would miraculously end the reign of Roman oppressors who kept them in debt and hungry. Jesus slipped quietly away.

Even after the devil left, and the angels ministered to Jesus, the temptation to be a power-hungry Messiah remained.

Second, the tempter invites Jesus to do a miracle to gain the attention and trust of the people. This is not just any bit of acrobatic diving but a plunge from the pinnacle of the temple. Look at Jeremiah 7. The prophet goes to the temple and tells the people, "Stop believing that just because God's temple is here, you are safe from the violence of other nations. No, how you live is what interests God, that you stop oppressing others and worshiping gods other than me."

on of violence

Another way to explain this passage is that God will not keep a country safe from people the country treats unjustly. So when the tempter suggests that Jesus jump from the temple, the devil is uniting church and state, temple and ruler of nations and offering a second path to Messiahship—doing a special sign to impress people so they will follow him on the basis of wonders rather than because they want to learn to live justly. (Mark 8:11).

The last temptation—to rule the kingdoms of this world—is the most obvious invitation to violence. Satan claims to be able to give the kingdoms to Jesus, which means he considers himself the power behind the Roman throne. Popular understanding of Jesus' day assumed that political sovereignty could only be grasped through forcefully taking power by the same violent means used by the Romans and intended by the Zealots: military might. But Jesus is clear: If ruling kingdoms means worshiping the devil, Jesus will have none of it. Jesus worships and serves only God, not earthly kingdoms and their violent military means.

Jesus knew his Scriptures. He knew his Messiah mission and thus said no, no, no—the kingdom of God will not come through bypassing the difficult changes of heart by using force and violence, by being a conqueror-Savior.

Jesus chose to fast so that he could better listen to God. When Jesus left the desert, he proclaimed his mission (Luke 4), chose his disciples (Matthew 4) and set his face toward Jerusalem and the cross.

The myth of redemptive violence: our temptation: We can learn a multitude of important lessons from the temptations stories, but let's center on one. The Jewish people of Jesus' time expected a Messiah who would redeem them by violence, then seek domination over the world. Even in the garden, Peter had not yet come to terms with the idea that violence is never the way of Jesus. This myth of redemptive violence taunts and tempts us yet today. Likely each of us struggled with it these past years as we tried to think how to contain Saddam Hussein.

Redemptive violence is Walter Wink's term. He explains this prevalent myth of our society as the belief that violence saves, that violence is necessary as a response to what's wrong in the world, that war brings peace, that might makes right. It is one of the oldest continuously repeated stories in the world. In fact, this idea that violence can do good things is so much a foundation of the way we think that we don't understand it to be a myth. It seems inevitable that violence works.

The idea that violence can do good things is so much a foundation of the way we think that we don't understand it to be a myth.

If a god is what you turn to when all else fails, violence functions as a god for many people. This gives violence a religious character. Violence demands from its devotees an obedience unto death.

Maybe you're like I am sometimes. I'd like to believe that God's vision of peace and love will work, that Jesus' life put forth an ideal we can actually live out. But then the doubts come. Can peacemaking succeed in this fallen world? It feels naïve. Oh, perhaps we're willing to try solutions other than violence to deal with a horrible situation, but when the evil doesn't go away, the only alternative is violence. It's the acceptable last resort, and often the only first resort. And to expect the government to use nonviolence to overcome violence? How dare we even consider that! The devil certainly has this one all tied up, leaving us hopeless and helpless in the midst of a society of militarism, hate and violence.

To see how pervasive this concept is in our entertainment, think of comic book heroes, spy thrillers, westerns and science fiction. The basic formula doesn't change: the bad guy does something rotten, and the good guy kills him for it.

Remember that sign-on letter, back in the fall of 2002? Jim Schrag, Mennonite Church USA executive director, wrote the letter asking that President Bush consider ways other than invasion and war to solve the problem of then-President Saddam Hussein. Perhaps some of you read that Jim, J. Daryl Byler (MCC Washington Office director) and I visited Ben Miller of the National Security Council, in White House West Wing offices, on

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

Sept. 12. I thought we were going to have handshakes and a few polite words by the office door—remember, this is the man who carried the Iraq portfolio in the White House. Miller was replaced a few months later, but at the time, he reported to the person in charge of Middle East affairs, who reported to Condoleezza Rice, who reported to the President. To my amazement, Ben led us to couches in a private office, and we sat and talked for a half hour about moral authority, hope in the possibility of nonviolence and true security.

My heart sank as it became obvious that Ben had, at least in his public, political role, bought into the myth of redemptive violence. He could see no way to contain President Saddam Hussein other than military might. I listed times in recent history when nonviolence changed the course of events—the fall of the Berlin Wall (a movement begun during candlelighting services in congregations), the power changeover in South Africa without a bloodbath (led by someone committed to Jesus), the civil rights movement in the United States. And Daryl explained the thoughts of the people who wrote the book and PBS TV show, "A Force More Powerful." These creative thinkers had ideas for containing the threat we felt from Iraq through nonviolence undertaken within the country, by the people of Iraq. Ben cut Daryl off abruptly. "The people of Iraq have suffered too much already. I couldn't ask them to take such a risk. Better that we amass troops on the border and force Hussein to surrender." Miller believed that forcing Hussein would result in a quick surrender and lessen the suffering of the weary people of Iraq.

Defeating our temptation of violence: First, we must look at this as a spiritual battle. That's where we began—with Jesus in the desert in a spiritual battle, deciding how his Messiahship would look. We are also in a spiritual battle, deciding what we will depend on for survival. Will we depend on a Savior who says, "Take up your cross and follow me," or on violence that says, "Hit hard and hit first so you won't get hit back?" Will we conquer our fear of enemies by trying to show them love or by seeking revenge on them?

We must make visible to ourselves and to people around us that there is an alternative to violence.

These are hard questions, because to face the fear of enemies requires us to acknowledge our own inner evil. To stop seeking revenge, we have to change, struggling daily to transform our shadow side. We have to see ourselves as no different in kind from our enemy. It means seeing God in the enemy as we learn to see God in ourselves—a God who loves and forgives requires conversion from the myth of redemptive violence to the God proclaimed by the prophets and by Jesus. We have to abandon our preferential option for violence and replace it with a preferential option for the oppressed. We can no longer rely on absolute weapons for the utter annihilation of an absolute enemy. This is perhaps the deepest spiritual battle of our times. Perhaps that is why the first commandment is, "Thou shall have no other gods before me."

Second, we must name the myth of redemptive violence. All of us, of all ages, can do this. Keep your ears open. Watch a superheroes cartoon show, even if you never do. Listen to politicians' speeches in favor of the war. Wonder why children need to play with pretend guns. Take note of the times you hear the assumption that although we think violence is a sorry answer to a problem, it is the only answer. Tell someone what you hear.

Third, to defeat this myth, be active in your pursuit of peace. Pray, act and resist. Look at Romans 12:14-21. Paul reminds us here that we are not to offer evil for evil but return good for evil. This means we actively seek the good of our enemies. We make visible to ourselves and to people around us that there is an alternative to violence. Learn the myriad times that nonviolence has worked so you can tell others about them.

Jesus chose a path no human expected—the humiliation of the cross. He didn't give in to the temptation to change enemies miraculously; he didn't unite church and state to lead him to kingship; he didn't use the sword to deliver people from the Romans. But also he didn't sit passively waiting. He acted; he confronted evil nonviolently. He accepted the cross, even though it made no sense. He trusted in God rather than in violence.

God is a God of hope. When violence successfully defeats violence, what horrors are ahead for a society? Death and despair, fear and violence. But the cross brings us resurrection, and what can be better than that? We have love—in and of the God who created the universe. This God knows what works. That's where I'll put my life and trust.

Susan Mark Landis, Orrville, Ohio, is peace advocate for Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership. This article is adapted from a sermon.

This is how

by Fred Bahnson

we kill in Zimbabwe, he explains,
the hot blood pumping life onto
his hands still busy with
the knife. *We do it like*
the Hebrews; first
the jugular, then the spinal cord.

I hold the lamb for him. Its warmth
lulls me until the knife moves, and life
comes gushing onto damp
September grass. Panicked
legs flail against mine—
a surprised bleating, then silence.

The new blood on his hands
brings back the day the soldiers
came to his village, how
they forced him to watch as they
cut open his sister—mute child—
before coming for him.

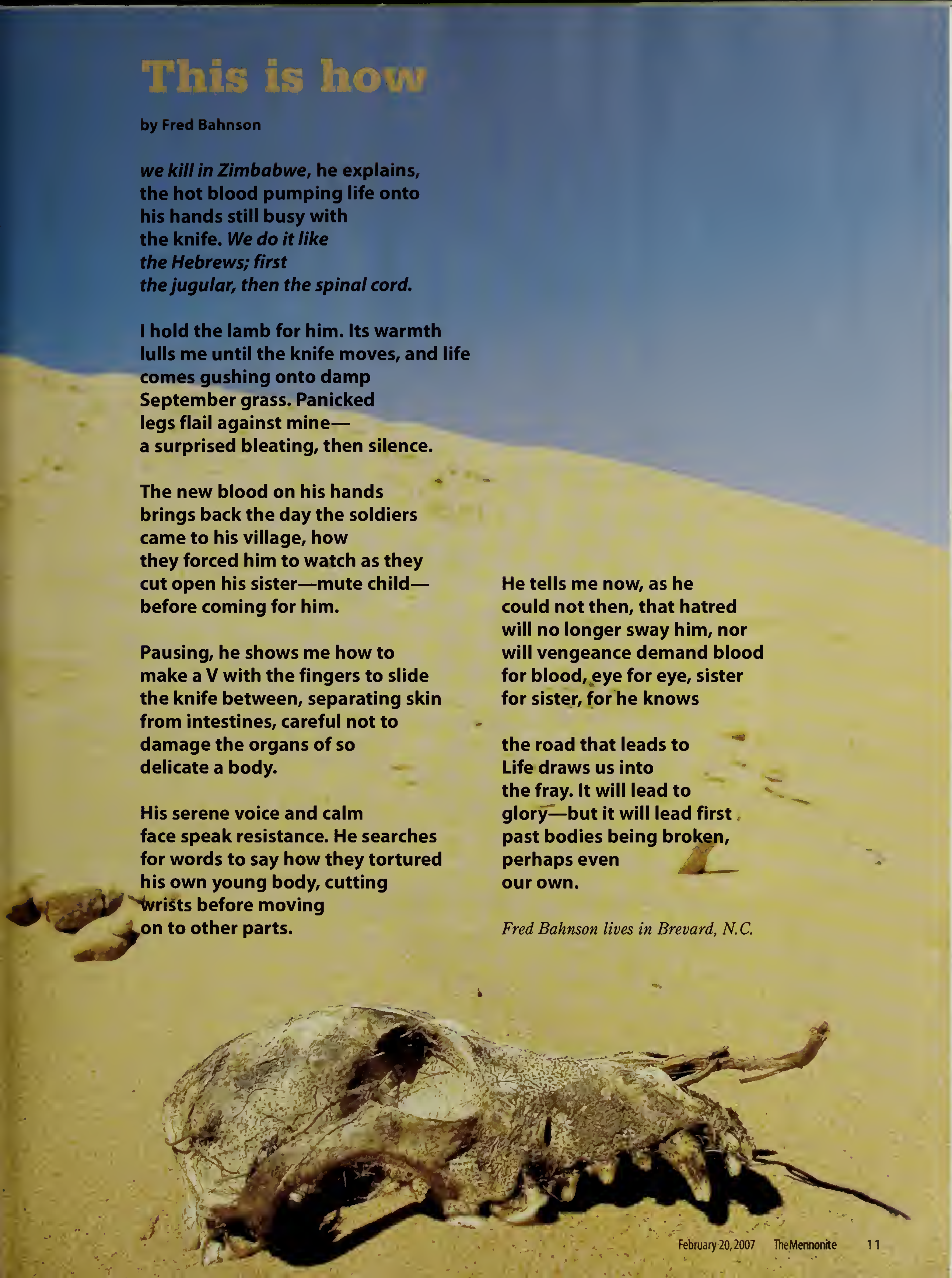
Pausing, he shows me how to
make a V with the fingers to slide
the knife between, separating skin
from intestines, careful not to
damage the organs of so
delicate a body.

His serene voice and calm
face speak resistance. He searches
for words to say how they tortured
his own young body, cutting
wrists before moving
on to other parts.

He tells me now, as he
could not then, that hatred
will no longer sway him, nor
will vengeance demand blood
for blood, eye for eye, sister
for sister, for he knows

the road that leads to
Life draws us into
the fray. It will lead to
glory—but it will lead first
past bodies being broken,
perhaps even
our own.

Fred Bahnson lives in Brevard, N.C.



The temptation

Jesus was tempted to short-circuit God's plan.

by Randy Good

Don't think it wasn't tempting. To turn stones into bread to eat, be notoriously rescued by angels and control the kingdoms of the world were not hypothetical cases or empty suggestions. They struck at the body and soul of Jesus.

Satan—the serpent, deceiver, tempter—is real and made Jesus real offers, offers designed to derail Jesus from his relationship with and from his mission. Though addressed to Jesus, the Son of God, Jesus endured the temptations as a man, fully human. He had available to him only what every believer has: a secure relationship with God as loving Father, the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit. Jesus limited himself to these resources for our sake: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). His temptations were as true and agonizing to him as ours are to us.

After 40 days without food, Jesus was famished. Satan invited him to doubt his Father's willingness and interest to provide for him. Jesus refused. Next, Jesus was tempted to prove God's love and care, to test his Father's willingness and interest by acting presumptively. Again Jesus refused.

Since Jesus did not turn aside from his dependence on and submission to the Father, Satan knew the third temptation must be baited with something enticing and potent, something that lined up with Jesus' heart.

The deceiver appeals to a good heart to do a good thing for a seemingly good reason, in the wrong way or at the wrong time.

"Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, 'To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours'" (Luke 4:5-7).

What was the bait here? The kingdoms of the world ultimately belong to Jesus anyway. Revelation reveals that everything will be redeemed and delivered to God. Satan's invitation to "worship me" could have meant not instead of but along with your Father.

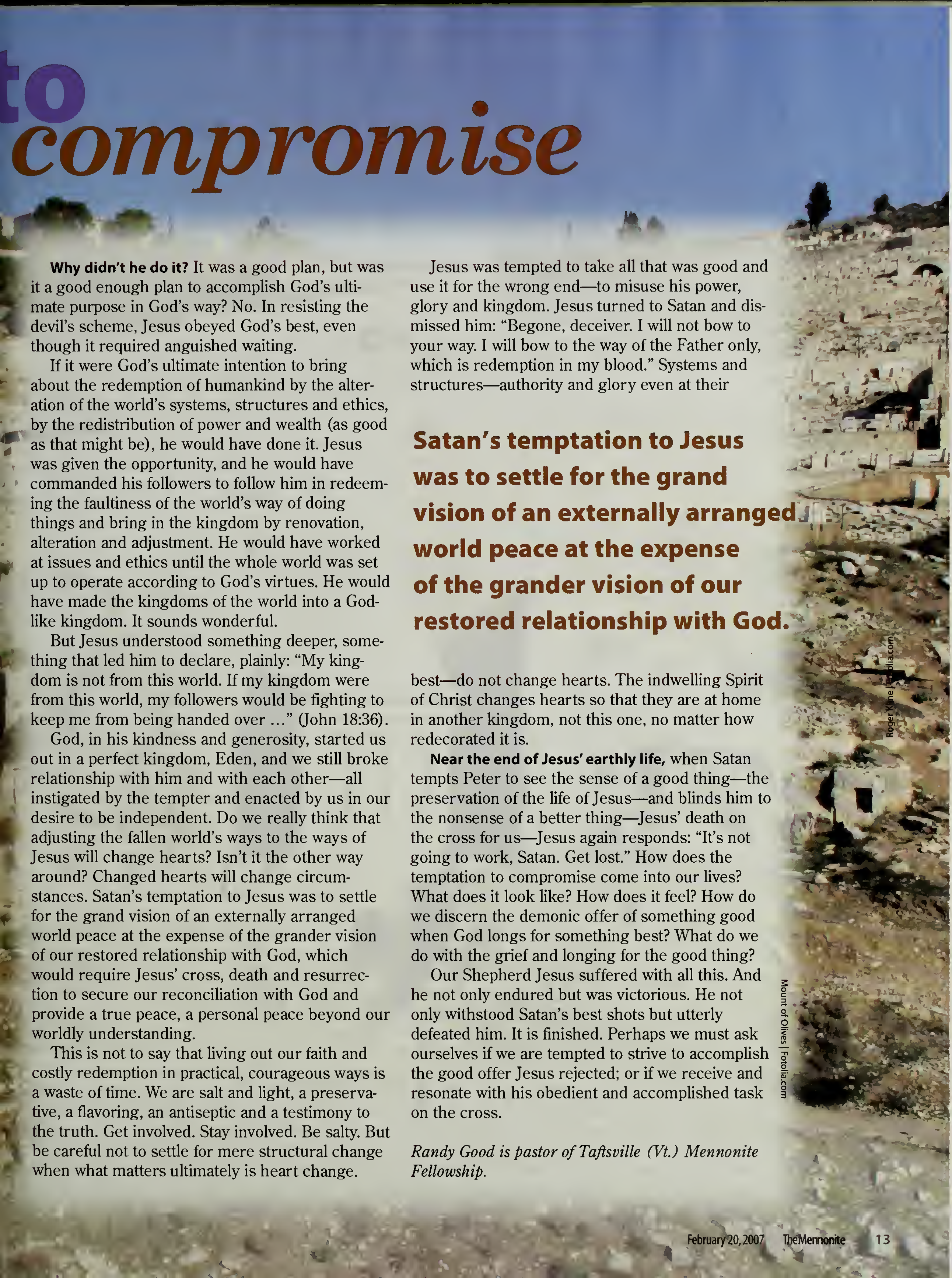
For now the capacity to delegate authority has been delivered to Satan, Prince of this world. Jesus did not dispute this. Satan grants this authority to whomever will use it, or, rather, uses deception to entice its use for his own ends. Greed, usury, subjugation, revenge, imperialism, bitterness, rebellion, genocide—all originate from Satanic influence. Satan coaxes the hearts of those in positions of power in the world so that those evils don't seem evil. They seem justified, for some perceived greater good. Even those with good hearts, maybe even especially those with good hearts, are susceptible to the temptation to compromise, just as Jesus was here.

This is where it gets tricky. The deceiver appeals to a good heart to do a good thing for a seemingly good reason, in the wrong way or at the wrong time. He offers something good in exchange for what is best, especially when receiving the best requires waiting. In Genesis, Abraham was tempted to provide for himself an offspring when God's promise seemed slow in coming. He gave in to the good notion of gaining a son, Ishmael, at the expense of waiting for Isaac, the son of God's doing.

Satan was making Jesus a bona fide offer. The structures, the infrastructures, the wealth, the power, the influence—"You can make use of it all, Jesus, however you want. Just give me some credit." This was not a temptation to own the kingdoms but to use the kingdoms for a great good. Imagine what Jesus, the gentle Shepherd, the Prince of Peace, could have done for the world with that offer. War, oppression and slavery—abolished. Sickness, hunger and poverty—wiped out. Pollution and wastefulness—outlawed. Perfect ethics, laws, justice and peace, right?

In control of the authority and glory of the kingdoms of the earth, Jesus could have effected the systemic changes we all long for. Under his influence, we could have a world with a near perfect environment—socially, politically, economically, ethically. Don't think he wasn't tempted.

to compromise



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Why didn't he do it? It was a good plan, but was it a good enough plan to accomplish God's ultimate purpose in God's way? No. In resisting the devil's scheme, Jesus obeyed God's best, even though it required anguished waiting.

If it were God's ultimate intention to bring about the redemption of humankind by the alteration of the world's systems, structures and ethics, by the redistribution of power and wealth (as good as that might be), he would have done it. Jesus was given the opportunity, and he would have commanded his followers to follow him in redeeming the faultiness of the world's way of doing things and bring in the kingdom by renovation, alteration and adjustment. He would have worked at issues and ethics until the whole world was set up to operate according to God's virtues. He would have made the kingdoms of the world into a God-like kingdom. It sounds wonderful.

But Jesus understood something deeper, something that led him to declare, plainly: "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over ..." (John 18:36).

God, in his kindness and generosity, started us out in a perfect kingdom, Eden, and we still broke relationship with him and with each other—all instigated by the tempter and enacted by us in our desire to be independent. Do we really think that adjusting the fallen world's ways to the ways of Jesus will change hearts? Isn't it the other way around? Changed hearts will change circumstances. Satan's temptation to Jesus was to settle for the grand vision of an externally arranged world peace at the expense of the grander vision of our restored relationship with God, which would require Jesus' cross, death and resurrection to secure our reconciliation with God and provide a true peace, a personal peace beyond our worldly understanding.

This is not to say that living out our faith and costly redemption in practical, courageous ways is a waste of time. We are salt and light, a preservative, a flavoring, an antiseptic and a testimony to the truth. Get involved. Stay involved. Be salty. But be careful not to settle for mere structural change when what matters ultimately is heart change.

Jesus was tempted to take all that was good and use it for the wrong end—to misuse his power, glory and kingdom. Jesus turned to Satan and dismissed him: "Begone, deceiver. I will not bow to your way. I will bow to the way of the Father only, which is redemption in my blood." Systems and structures—authority and glory even at their best—do not change hearts. The indwelling Spirit of Christ changes hearts so that they are at home in another kingdom, not this one, no matter how redecorated it is.

Satan's temptation to Jesus was to settle for the grand vision of an externally arranged world peace at the expense of the grander vision of our restored relationship with God.

Near the end of Jesus' earthly life, when Satan tempts Peter to see the sense of a good thing—the preservation of the life of Jesus—and blinds him to the nonsense of a better thing—Jesus' death on the cross for us—Jesus again responds: "It's not going to work, Satan. Get lost." How does the temptation to compromise come into our lives? What does it look like? How does it feel? How do we discern the demonic offer of something good when God longs for something best? What do we do with the grief and longing for the good thing?

Our Shepherd Jesus suffered with all this. And he not only endured but was victorious. He not only withstood Satan's best shots but utterly defeated him. It is finished. Perhaps we must ask ourselves if we are tempted to strive to accomplish the good offer Jesus rejected; or if we receive and resonate with his obedient and accomplished task on the cross.

Randy Good is pastor of Taftsville (Vt.) Mennonite Fellowship.

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The myth
violence

by Dennis Byler

For as far back as there are written records of civilization, people have been fed the myth of "justified violence" from earliest childhood. The classic presentation of this myth is the story of the reluctant hero who resists his sacred duty, established by the gods, to defend the defenseless and protect the weak. In this tale, the unmitigated evil and villainy of those who do not respect life eventually compels the hero to come to his senses, avenge innocent victims and slay the evildoers. And at that point the gods intervene to right every wrong and bring forth a new age of peace and prosperity.

Most Christians are unaware of how profoundly pagan, how unChristian or anti-Christian, this myth is.

This plot is easily recognized in literature and film. It is conscientiously worked into children's stories, helping shape their moral attitudes. As a children's story, the plot sticks to its purest form in Disney's *The Lion King*. Perhaps the most memorable film version is the 1952 movie *High Noon*, in which the pacifist convictions of Quakers are shown to be wickedly irresponsible in the face of the real, nitty-gritty evil in this world. It is also the plot of many other films, such as *Braveheart* and *The Patriot*, and much of television.

About 13,000 years ago, humanity adopted agriculture and animal husbandry, and populations grew to the point where, for the first time, large concentrations of people dwelt together in close proximity. About that time true warfare arose (as opposed to the occasional skirmish involving small numbers of nonprofessional fighters). At this time also religion arose (as opposed to a haphazard collection of beliefs and superstitions). One of the functions of religion has always been its usefulness for making this most unnatural (actually bizarre) behavior of warfare seem necessary and unavoidable. For these purposes, I include as "religion" more recent, superficially secular, phenomena such as nationalism, fascism, communism and many other ideologies. These substitute some abstraction other than gods, yet they are religious in the power of the loyalty they inspire, a loyalty so emotional, unquestionable, worshiped and beloved as to motivate people not only to lay down their lives but be willing to kill.

Exceptional individuals will always be willing to die for others, and to kill as well; but the willingness to do so on a massive scale, and for such abstract causes as justice or nation or peace or God, requires the whole society to be mobilized to indoctrinate its individuals from earliest childhood with moral tales along the lines of *The Lion King*.

The myth of justified violence is everywhere. It is so pervasive and unavoidable as to amount to systematic, continual brainwashing. It is the most consistent and constant moral grounding found in TV programming. Its repetition is so unceasing, it ends up being taken for unshakable moral truth. The myth of justified violence is so irresistible in its ceaseless repetition, so foundational to our earliest training in human values, morals and attitudes, that most Christians are unaware of how profoundly pagan, how unChristian or anti-Christian, this myth is. Christian authors tend to be unaware that before they became Christian they were already indoctrinated with the all-pervasive morality of the myth of justified violence. Thus they find this myth irresistible and the plot of the reluctant warrior inspiring and profoundly moral.

This is true, for instance, of C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*, which have been formative for two or three generations of Christian children, including Mennonite children. It is even more explicitly true in his less-known Space Trilogy. But C.S. Lewis is only a case in point, merely typical of Christian writers unaware of their bondage to the effects of the myth of justified violence.

At this level, the religion of ancient Babylon is no different from the view many Christians claim to read in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation.

Most Christians, including—curiously enough—many Mennonites, are persuaded that love and a consistent, conscientious refusal of violence will ultimately be unable to overcome evil. In the end, as they understand the book of Revelation, even God will need to concede that love is not enough, that the cross of Jesus is not enough. Even Jesus, they believe, will need to forsake the cross in favor of the sword in order for justice, peace and righteousness finally to prevail forever

# of justified

Many of us have been brainwashed from childhood.

and ever. They are so blinded by the myth of justified violence that they fail to notice that the sword of the Lamb in Revelation always proceeds from his mouth. The weapon that ultimately conquers all evil is the power of persuasion, the power of the words of truth Jesus spoke in teaching, as collected and remembered in the Gospels.

Since their adherence to the myth of justified violence is prior to their Christian belief, they tend to read other Bible passages as well in ways contrary to the Spirit of Jesus. For instance, they read Romans 13:1-7 in isolation of its context in two key areas. The literary context for Romans 13:1-7 stretches at least from Romans 12:14 to 13:12. Most explicitly, Romans 13:1-7 must never be read in isolation from the inspiredly pithy and commonsensical definition of love Paul provides as an overarching measure of Christian conduct in verse 10: "Love does no wrong to a neighbor." Whatever mandate the state might have received from God, it is clear that those who wield "the sword" live by a different code from those who bear the cross of Jesus, who owe no one anything other than love.

In its historical and social context, it must be remembered that in Romans 13:1-7 Paul cannot possibly mean that the state can do no wrong, since both he and the Jesus he preached were murdered by the state. Paul was most likely teaching a strategy for lying low and surviving even when the state appears to be irredeemably under the sway of evil, holding out the hope that, in spite of appearances, God's purposes will prevail in the end. The sword in these verses is that wielded by whoever happens to be in power, however they got there (legitimately or not) and regardless of what ruthless crimes they may be committing to stay in power. It applies to Saddam or Castro as much as to Bush. Unless we are willing to affirm that all state violence is legitimate in every case, these verses seem to be pleading for a different interpretation from the traditional one inspired by the myth of justified violence.

That myth is also the code by which al Qaeda lives. It is also the foundational belief of both Israelis and Palestinians, both Sunni and Shiite Iraqis, both Union and Confederate Americans in the Civil War, and on and on. Thus do the war gods of Egypt and Babylon and Rome still rule humankind. They inspire a devotion and love so profound in their worshipers that people are willing (though always with the required regret) to fly planes into office towers or slaughter hundreds of thousands of people in response to flying planes into office towers.

Those who act according to this myth will stop at nothing, most certainly not at the innocence of their victims. Caiaphas aptly summed up this worldview with the unforgettable words, "It is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed" (John 11:50). Caiaphas said this about someone he had good reason to guess was innocent of the incoherent mix of charges brought by false witnesses. Always, inevitably, all sorts of innocent victims get in the way of well-intentioned warriors as they go about their so-called duty to make the world "safe" for the rest of us.

Yet those of us who dare follow that man so unjustly murdered for reasons of state will never quit standing up and witnessing that there is another way. We will witness to the fact that, against all odds, against every possible logic, that man rose from death and calls us to pick up our crosses and follow his footsteps, imitating his nonviolent confrontation with evil, even the horrendous evil of "justified violence."

And no, we will not, under any circumstances, be grateful for the sacrifices of those who, blinded and deceived by the myth of justified violence, kill and die "for us." Instead we will mourn as senseless and immeasurably tragic their unnecessary deaths and the unnecessary deaths of all they have killed. If and when we are granted short periods of peace and freedom amid the darkness of this age, it is God alone we will praise and thank.

Some of us gave up on the gods of Babylon 2,000 years ago. Our eyes have been opened, the brainwashing of this evil age no longer works with us. And for those who continue as before, we feel only sorrow and compassion.

We will not, under any circumstances, be grateful for the sacrifices of those who, blinded and deceived by the myth of justified violence, kill and die "for us."

Dennis Byler works with Anabaptist churches in Burgos, Spain, and is supported by Mennonite Mission Network.

The harvest

A reflection on Luke 10:1-12

by Jane Stoltzfus Buller

Reading Luke 10:1-12 with the executive board of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference over an 18-month period was a gift. You may think reading one text every meeting and reflecting on the same words every time we got together became old. However, it led me to new understanding about our mission as disciples of Jesus. One question helps me grasp what Jesus' ministry and message of good news meant for his time and ours: What is that plentiful harvest Jesus talks about as he sends out the disciples as laborers, sheep among wolves?

A common interpretation is that the harvest is individuals. Our mission is to bring individuals into the barn, the church. We are to move out among the peoples and find those ready for harvesting, ready to accept Jesus. We then offer the salvation ABCs and invite them to join the church, live as believers, repent of their sin and move into a new way of life. They have been cut or harvested for something new, the community of believers, leaving their old way behind. They have been harvested for salvation, harvested for heaven.

As I read these verses over and over, something new took hold of my imagination. It began in the instructions Jesus gives. The disciples are to say, "Peace to this house." Peace is offered and received, bread and board are shared. The sick are healed, and the nearness of the reign of God is announced. A new concept of labor and harvest emerged from these instructions to stay put, eat and drink what is provided, and be near as the reign of God.

A new concept of labor and harvest emerged from these instructions to stay put, eat and drink what is provided, and be near as the reign of God.

The idea of harvesting peace grabbed my attention and imagination. It connects with the vision of the God who throughout history seeks to establish a community of people living together in righteousness. It is a vision of shalom, a theme carried throughout the Bible. All through the story of God with God's people is an emphasis on establishing a shalom community where God's justice and peace are extended to the whole world. It is the experience we long for, the new Jerusalem promised through Jesus Christ. This concept of peace is not an absence of war but a way of living that embraces life and nurtures the fullness of life in whatever and whoever we are connected to.

Broken world: If the harvest and the plentiful crop ready for harvest is shalom, how does that change the way we live and work in this violent and broken world? What does the good news mean as a harvest of peace?

If we seek to harvest peace, we labor within ourselves. When we think of others as the harvest, the labor becomes an effort to change the other person—their beliefs or way of life. We are dependent on their choices and responses. But if we think about the labor as an effort toward a harvest of peace, the work is in ourselves. We labor to be peace. We labor in ourselves to respond, to act peacefully. Jesus said to go out to the towns and be peace—live together with those you meet, eat the food served, offer gifts of healing and presence, name the nearness of God. Being with others as "little Christs" is the labor we are called to. Then

# of peace

what is already present and waiting to be harvested among the people comes to fruition. It, too, is peace. And the reign of God grows.

The real possibility of not finding the harvest in a place leads Jesus to instruct the disciples not to waste time working where there will be no fruit. The emphasis is on harvesting peace, not dissension and discord. There will be places not ready to be harvested. The towns where no welcome is offered, where there is no fruit of peace to be harvested, will indeed be worse off than Sodom, for rather than the harvest of peace there will be violence, division, death and destruction. A living hell, as indeed we can see all around us today. Yet, perhaps in the future, at other times of harvest, those same towns, those same people, will welcome peace.

This understanding helps me broaden the idea of the harvest Jesus talks about. It opens up the possibilities in ways that are life-giving and hopeful. There are many points in our lives where all are able to labor for peace. Between and among our family groups. Between and among religious groups and ethnic groups. Where fear reigns. Where guns and violence are common. Within each person and where each person meets another. With our earth and all life with which we share it. In each of these places of relationship, the labor is hard, the effort demands much from us, but the harvest is plentiful as peace impacts the life around it and reproduces itself from one person to another.

Lambs in the midst of wolves: Certainly there is truth in the way this sending text has been understood in the past. But I find myself envisioning the changed and transformed world we will inhabit if we labor at harvesting peace among ourselves and peace among those we meet. I get excited thinking about the difference such a labor may bring to our world. To go out, as lambs in the midst of wolves, carrying nothing but the peace we have received in Jesus and that we practice as we eat and drink, cure the sick and proclaim the reign of God among us. Being Christ's peace right where we are. Right now.

What a possibility—to be co-laborers with God, harvesting a reign of peace. Our world is desperately in need of such labor. May we find the power and strength within us to labor for such a harvest.

Jane Stoltzfus Buller is a pastor at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

If we think about the labor as an effort toward a harvest of peace, the work is in ourselves. We labor to be peace.

Fotolia.com

What did the Pope say about Islam?

Steve Dintaman is chair of the theology department at Lithuania Christian College.

Rarely does a theological lecture stir up the controversy that erupted when Pope Benedict XVI delivered a talk Sept. 12, 2006, on the difference between Christianity and Islam. Many people in the Muslim world took to the streets in protest.

The offense centered around a quote the Pope used from a late 14th-century discussion between a Byzantine Christian emperor and "an educated Persian." The emperor had written, "Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached." Benedict passed along this quote without commenting on whether he approved or disapproved of it. Using such an inflammatory quote without comment seems at least to be a major slip-up by a man who is the official spokesman for the world's largest Christian community. It is hard to see how Muslims could be anything but offended by his choice of words.

Defenders of the pope suggest people should read the entire lecture, which is an argument against religious violence. But a careful reading of what he said will hardly reassure the Muslim world. The entire lecture raises disturbing questions. The heart of it is a description of how Christianity and Islam are different and, to put it simply, that Christianity is rational, while Islam is not, and therefore it is violent.

The key difference, according to the Pope, is that Christianity believes God has a logos. He goes on to describe how Christianity was formed by a "convergence" between biblical faith and Greek thought. In Greek philosophy, "logos" refers to the rational, moral order of the universe. Benedict believes this rational heritage is an "intrinsic" part of the Christian faith that must not be removed. Since God is rational, he argues, "violence is incompatible with the nature of God and the nature of the soul." Islam, however, believes God is utterly transcendent. Islam's God transcends even the rules of reason. God, according to Benedict's reading of Islam, is not bound by anything, even his own word, and if God wanted to he could even command us "to practice idolatry."

If Christianity is rational and therefore rejects forced conversions, the pope should explain why in the same 14th century the Teutonic Knights conducted an officially sanctioned Crusade designed to forcibly convert the last pagan tribes in what is now Lithuania. He could have acknowledged the Catholic Church's failures in this regard.

He goes on to say that even though Christianity first developed in the East, it "finally took on its historically decisive character in Europe … this convergence (between biblical faith and Greek philosophy), with the subsequent addition of the Roman heritage, created Europe and remains the foundation of what can rightly be called Europe."

What does this say to churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America? What does it say to Europeans who want to build a pluralistic Europe not dominated by the authority of one religion? It sounds as if anyone who does not acknowledge biblical faith, Greek thought and the Roman heritage cannot truly be "European."

Biblical interpreters have said the biblical and Greek concepts of logos are not the same. The logos ("Word") in John 1:1 is not the rational order of the universe but the power by which God creates and communicates. In a sense, Benedict is right, the difference between Christianity and Islam is the idea of the Word. The two religions do have a different understanding of how God communicates. In Islam God communicates through prophets and sacred writings, the final expression being the Koran. In the Christian faith God communicates ultimately by taking on human form in our world and suffering and dying for our redemption. Islam honors Jesus as a prophet and even as Messiah but does not believe he is God with us, and it cannot accept the idea that the Messiah suffered and died. The Incarnation would be a better starting point to develop the idea that Christians should consistently reject violence and practice love even for their enemies. Vulnerable love is the supreme expression of the character of God.

The statement from Benedict XVI has been a major setback in Christian-Muslim relations. I hope Benedict can take the initiative in building better understanding and relations with the Muslim world. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Luis Padilla**—Jim Bishop
- **Yorufumi Yaguchi**—Anna Groff

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

MC USA delegation arrives in Congo

Group of 13 splits up, visits churches from two Mennonite conferences.

Hundreds of cloth strands hung from the aluminum ceiling of Mont Gafula Mennonite Church in Kinshasa, Congo. Colorful Scripture verses decorated the wall behind the cement stage. Two young women's singing voices echoed from microphones, adding to the festive worship service.

Pastor Selembao Lola said the church purchased the public address system last year as a means of evangelizing.

"When people hear it, they can come and worship together," Lola said.

Lola, who grew up Mennonite, established the church in 1995 in a part of Kinshasa that did not previously have a Mennonite church. The church, an open-air structure, is located in the yard of a church member's house.

Four members from the Mennonite Church USA delegation visited Congo Feb. 2-16 and worshiped with the Mont Gafula church on Feb. 4.

"You are not only guests but brothers and sisters in Christ," said Lola while welcoming the delegation. "You pray for us, and we'll pray for you, and God will use our gifts to bless each other."

Delegation member Addie Banks, a pastor at King of Glory Tabernacle in Bronx, N.Y., delivered the sermon. Banks spoke of Paul's work to bring the Jews and the Gentiles together, comparing that to the beginning relationship between the Mennonite churches in Congo and Mennonite Church USA.

"God's purpose is to make one group from two to embody the power of Christ," Banks said. She also reminded the congregation that "poverty does not mean without a purpose. … Mennonite Church USA needs your capacity to endure."

For many Congolese Mennonites in Kinshasa, the sheer act of getting to church shows commitment. Tim Lind, of Mennonite World Conference and coordinator for the trip, said most people living in Kinshasa would say transportation is the number one difficulty they face on a daily basis.

Suzanne Lind, co-country representative for Mennonite Central Committee and a delegation member, said it took most people several hours to get to church at Mont Gafula.

Other members of the Mennonite Church USA delegation spread out to Mennonite churches in the Congo Evangelical Mennonite Church (CEM) and the Congo Mennonite Church (CMCO). Both groups grew out of the Congo Inland Mission, now known as the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, in the early 20th century. The groups continue to grow.

Keith Wilson, a member of Community Mennonite Church in Markham, Ill., visited a CEM church. Wilson said a young boy drumming during the service brought him from "goose bumps to tears, back to goose bumps." The drummer used wood-carved sticks on a crate and a bass pedal attached to the inside of a plastic container, along with a whistle. Wilson, who said he has been to "big-time concerts," felt moved by the young man's talent and genuine attitude of worship.

Anna Groff

Addie Banks (right), from Bronx, N.Y., shares family photos with translator Mado Fuyunguya and members of Mont Gafula Mennonite Church in Kinshasa, Congo's capital. Banks is part of a 13-member delegation from Mennonite Church USA.

Wilson, 25, is the young adult advocate in his congregation and said he had never traveled outside the country before this delegation. Wilson said he feels moved by the people in Congo who remain in the same difficult economic status year after year and still have a passion for the church.

On Feb. 5, the delegation visited Kinshasa Christian University, where Alfonse Tshiala, provincial president of CEM, shared the history of his church, which is a community of refugees. He said he hopes that Mennonites in the Congo and Mennonite Church USA can move forward on the question of poverty and materialism that divides the two groups.

The group also met with 35 Mennonite university students and the Mennonite Women Theologians group.

Pakisa Tshimika, associate general secretary of Mennonite World Conference and from Congo, said many delegations in the past formed to see "the field"—or mission field. "That language is shifting in this group," he said.

The delegation's purpose is to "visit" the Mennonites in the Congo and experience where they live, how they worship and what they value, he said. Tshimika hopes the members will "take it all in" and not feel pressure to form a concrete plan at this point.—*Anna Groff*

Pastors Week a time to question culture

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary event features Rodney Clapp.

Mary E. Klassen

Pastors Week during the last week of January each year is the equivalent of homecoming for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Taking advantage of the opportunities to make connections face-to-face are Wayne Speigle, Telford, Pa., Daniel Hertzler, Scottdale, Pa., and Willard Swartley, professor emeritus of AMBS.

Why do houses no longer have front porches? How did skateboarding become a popular sport among youth? Why do car dealerships in the United States fly large flags? What do drive-through restaurants say about the experience of eating and fellowship?

With these specific examples, Rodney Clapp, speaker for a "sold out" pastors week Jan. 22-25 at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., urged listeners to question the culture around them. This year's theme for the annual event, "Meeting Jesus in Popular Culture," was shaped through three lectures by Clapp, who is an author, lecturer and editorial director of Brazos Press, an imprint of Baker Books.

"Cultures help us shape what we pay attention to," Clapp said. "Popular culture gives us narratives and stories we will live by and die by."

Popular culture is not just entertainment and corporations, he said. "It also includes the way people engage or appropriate the products of entertainment and corporations," Clapp said. Because of this, all of us endorse and enter popular culture, knowingly or unknowingly," Clapp said.

What some participants found surprising was Clapp's challenge for them to develop a curiosity about popular culture. Find things you like in popular culture, Clapp told the group, in order to understand the desires and longings that bring people to embrace it.

In his third presentation during the event, Clapp gave listeners tools for Christians and churches to use in approaching popular culture. He emphasized asking questions so that we become more aware of how our culture influences us. He urged the 220 participants to make careful choices about what to appropriate into their lives.

"We are Christians first, and what orients us foremost is our baptisms," he said.

In addressing media specifically, Clapp explained that the church is a kind of medium, standing between God and the world, representing God to the world.

"The church is a unique medium charged with witnessing to Christ. One of the ways we do this is with gathered worship," He said that the church is imperfect, "but it is the way God has chosen to work."

Extending his emphasis on asking questions, Clapp encouraged pastors to help their congregations develop "Christian cultural agency," so they don't passively take in media. This includes asking what symbols mean, what stories are being told and by whom, and how patterns of living and communicating have developed and how they are changing.

In order to develop this Christian cultural agency, Clapp said, several foundational elements are needed: participation in Christian community and mission; regular, formative and transformative participation in worship; grounding in Scripture; awareness of other cultures and finding similarities and differences between Christian signs, traditions and practices and those of other cultures.

When asked about how Christians can counter the pervasive messages in the United States that emphasize war and conflict, Clapp reiterated that Christians themselves are media.

"We have to supplement the messages around us. There's no reason we shouldn't be talking to Christian brothers and sisters in Iraq. We don't need to get all of our news from CNN. The church is the most catholic—with a small 'c'—body on earth. Those connections are important, and we need to help those stories be heard."

During the four-day event, workshops delved into specific aspects of popular culture and media. Mary H. Schertz, AMBS professor of New Testament, led a workshop on the Gospel of Judas; Loren Johns, academic dean, on the Left Behind series and Revelation; Alan Kreider, associate professor of church history and mission, on *The DaVinci Code*; Andy Brubacher Kaethler, director of !Explore, on youth and culture; and Mary E. Klassen on storytelling as a medium for communicating values and faith.—*Mary E. Klassen of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary*

Leaders focus on spiritual practices

225 attend annual training school at Eastern Mennonite Seminary

"We are living in a smorgasbord culture where everything is interesting and nothing matters," said Dorothy Bass, keynote speaker for the Jan.16-18 School for Leadership Training at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va.

"Christian practices are things Christian people do over time that reflect a response to God's grace," said Bass, director of the Valparaiso (Ind.) Project on the Education and Formation of People in Faith, an ecumenical project to develop resources to help people live the Christian faith with vitality and integrity.

"Practices that reflect abundant life are endangered in our society," Bass said. "They are being overcome by lifestyles that are rich in things but impoverished in things that matter."

Over three days, Bass encouraged the 225 participants to reflect on their own experiences of Christian practices such as hospitality, Sabbath, forgiveness, healing and discernment, among others.

These practices, Bass said, are shaping factors in the lives of Christians.

"A Christian practice is not just niceness or some belief that we feel we should enact," Bass said. "A Christian practice is a way of living that is woven into our daily lives. Participation in these practices is formative. It makes you someone, but study of the content and meaning behind the practices can be transformative."

Bass used the practices of Sabbath and hospitality to illustrate how Christian practices form and transform.

"Sabbath is now something Christians can choose," she said. "Resting [as in Sabbath] is one way of reminding us that we are not the Creator, and we don't have to keep the world going."

"It has been challenging for me to think about practices like hospitality and Sabbath," said Marc Hochstetler, pastor at Moorhead Mennonite Church, Millersburg, Ohio. "It has been good to look at these practices again and remember their biblical background."

Joan Yoder, a hospice nurse and lay leader at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen, Ind., said, "I came [to the School for Leadership Training] for my own personal renewal. Coming here has allowed me to receive spiritual nourishment, instead of always having to provide spiritual food for others."

Stephen Breck Reid, academic dean at Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind., and an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren, was a special resource speaker during the event.

Jim Bishop

The opening session of the School for Leadership Training at Eastern Mennonite University included an invitation for everyone to "Come to the welcoming table" for fruit and drink. At right are Peggy Packard, a second year M. Div student and John Stoltzfus, a first-year certificate student.

He invited the audience to "gather at the welcoming table," to experience the theme of this year's program, "Practicing Life Abundant in the Congregation and in Daily Life."

"What would happen in your congregation if all members opened their eyes and saw all the (spiritual) resources available to them?" he asked. "The church needs to hear the testimonies of those whose eyes are wide open … how many stories are there just waiting to be told?"

Drawing on an Old Testament story of the prophet Elisha facing an overwhelming army from Syria surrounding the city (2 Kings 6:8-23), Reid noted Elisha's declaration to the people, "Do not be afraid, for there are more with us than there are with them."

"We're too often pushed by our own set of fears," Reid said. "Whereas God is calling us to encounter and lower our anxieties at his welcoming table."

Reid also led a class on "Psalms as Practice for Making Room [at the Welcoming Table]." He encouraged class members to "expose your congregation to the wide emotional expressions found in the Psalms, including the laments.

Reid commended study of Psalms 120 through 134, called the Psalms of ascent, which depict a pilgrim people on a journey.

"The Psalm writer takes an activist view of God," Reid said, "one who neither slumbers nor sleeps, who is active in history. We need to read the larger world into the Psalms and discover the missional language that is there."

Next year's School for Leadership Training will be held Jan. 21-24, 2008 on the theme "Embodying Sexual Wholeness."—*Jim Bishop and Laura Lehman Amstutz for Eastern Mennonite Seminary*

Global Anabaptist diaconate planned

Mennonite World Conference leaders want team for churches in the South.

Mennonite World Conference will send a "Koinonia Delegation" to Zimbabwe in 2007 to build communion and fellowship with its members there who continue to endure distress (see News Digest, Feb. 7). The team is a response to MWC general secretary Larry Miller's promise to Zimbabweans on behalf of all participants at the close of Assembly 14 in Bulawayo in 2003: "We will not forget you."

A larger Global Anabaptist Deacons plan is also being formed in response to the service consultation held in Pasadena, Calif., in March 2006. MWC officers and senior staff moved these support initiatives forward at their meeting in Fresno, Calif., Jan. 5-6.

They decided to send one international Koinonia delegation in each of the next three years to a different region. The primary purpose of the teams, named by MWC and selected from member churches and volunteers, is to stand in solidarity with churches living in difficult circumstances—not to bring immediate solutions to their problems.

Danisa Ndlovu, MWC president-elect and Brethren in Christ bishop of Zimbabwe, told the officers that in his country "each day seems to bring more hardships." The team will go to Zimbabwe in August at the time of the annual Brethren in Christ conference.

MWC anticipates sending a team to Asia in 2008 and is facilitating a Mennonite Church USA "church-to-church" delegation to two churches in the Democratic Republic of Congo in February (see page 19).

> **While ... Mennonite service agencies respond generously to world disasters, there is too little attention directed specifically to the global Anabaptist faith family.**—Larry Miller

The deacon concept is still being shaped with the intention of creating a Global Anabaptist Deacon Commission alongside other MWC commissions. Officers identified three roles for such a commission: to be alert to needs within the global Anabaptist family, to call the global church to prayer and to organize a response.

The majority of MWC member churches are in the South, many of them in particular need. Miller pointed out that while churches perform the role of deacon in their local context—a biblical concept from the first Christian church—and Mennonite service agencies respond generously to world disasters, there is too little attention directed specifically to the global Anabaptist faith family.

Global Anabaptist Deacons could help fill that void. Just as importantly, these deacons could also be alert to the diverse needs of the churches in the global North and help the worldwide family of faith respond. Part of the goal is to create an ongoing list of potential deacons from which people with appropriate skills would be called for a specific time and particular tasks.

MWC, in consultation with host countries, would provide orientation prior to visits. Pakisa Tshimika, associate general secretary, and Miller will refine a proposal for a Global Anabaptist Deacons Commission for executive committee action in August.

Plans for Assembly 15 are progressing as interest grows inside and outside Paraguay—particularly in North America and Europe, where connections with Paraguay are strong due to many migrations. The MWC executive committee, meeting July 31-Aug. 7 in Asunción, Paraguay, will decide whether to continue the "continental days" or move to building on the theme from day to day in more of a teaching ministry. They will also decide the theme, taking into account suggestions now being solicited.

With Assembly 15 in Paraguay only 30 months away, overall MWC funding is in a normal situation. Assembly expenses are accumulating, and income, including registration fees, which have not yet been set, will rise as the event gets closer. Costs will be significantly higher than for Africa 2003. Thanks in part to a group of donor partners who have made substantial commitments to MWC's operating fund each year for four years leading up to 2009, MWC has had a good financial year, with a positive year-end balance.

Work is continuing on the MWC General Council's action to change MWC "councils"—functioning for the past 10 years—to "commissions." General Council will not change its name. Global Mission Fellowship, whose next meeting will be held in connection with Assembly 15 in 2009, continues with its current goals and membership but is in the process of becoming an MWC commission by 2009.

"Commissions will be groups of people working in the context and on behalf of General Council on issues of concern to MWC member churches," says Miller. "Some of them will be ongoing and others will come and go."—*Ferne Burkhardt for Mennonite World Conference*

Group of 17 examines work in China

China Educational Exchange is now called Mennonite Partners in China.

A report issued after a China Study Tour last fall urges continued partnership with Chinese church leaders and the expansion of the Chinese Educational Exchange program. Since the trip, CEE has been renamed Mennonite Partners in China.

"We are deeply convinced that China and the church in China will play an increasingly important role in the emerging world and in ecumenical relationships," wrote Carl Redekop and John A. Lapp in the group's report released Dec. 24, 2006.

Led by Mennonite Partners in China director Myrrl Byler, the three-week trip included 17 retired teachers, spouses, a physician and an artist from five U.S. states—none of whom were sponsored by or directly representing any organization. The trip was jointly-sponsored by Mennonite Partners in China and the Anabaptist Center for Religion and Society.

"We went to China, as this remarkable people is becoming increasingly influential in our world. We wanted to see CEE at work. We were interested in deepening our understanding of the substantial changes in Chinese life, and above all, we wanted to listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches in China," said the report.

Mennonite Partners in China carries out projects with Chinese partners in educational institutions, local government organizations. Study Tour participants met with six Chinese church leaders and scholars in Beijing, Nanjing and Shanghai. There they found a growing interest in religious studies and a readiness to explore the history and contribution of Christianity in China.

"We feel this context offers an unusual opportunity for conversation and dialogue," said participants. "In our conversations with Chinese Christians we felt their passionate commitment to be a postdenominational church. We do not understand the fullness of what this means or its implications for the church beyond China.

Participants urged new and creative ways for church agencies to interact with Chinese agencies, modeled on mutuality and partnership.

"This suggests giving those working in China freedom to relate in a collegial way, moving from a giving/serving role to a learning/receiving role. Mutuality should be our essential mark in mission."

According to the report, this already exists. "We wish to express fully our enthusiasm for the work of CEE," participants said. "Both leaders and staff impressed us with their competence, spiritual motivation, cultural sensitivity and above all with the quality and extent of their relationships."

Several factors that contribute to this growing enthusiasm include China's increasingly open political climate. "We quickly discovered the radical change going on in China. We were overwhelmed with the frenetic building boom and growing consumerism. We heard virtually no comments on Maoism or Communist ideology."

The churches in China struggle with questions regarding identity and calling. However, the Mennonite tradition of "alternative approaches to being church" situates it well in relating to Chinese churches, said the report.—*Sarah Roth, an intern this semester at* The Mennonite

Chinese province honors Mennonite teachers

Four Mennonite workers were among the top foreign teachers in one of China's most populous provinces, according to the Sichuan Bureau of Education. The bureau rewarded Todd Hanson, Catherine McKinlay, Carol Park and Holly Showalter with its first provincial "most excellent foreign teacher" awards.

The four teachers, serving with Mennonite Partners in China (formerly called China Educational Exchange), were among 48 foreigners honored during a pre-Christmas ceremony in the provincial capital of Chengdu.Hanson, who has worked in China since 1994, said all four of the Mennonite Partners in China teachers nominated by their schools were named recipients. The recognition, he said, is another indication of the importance of English teachers in China and affirms the reputation of MPC instructors, who have worked in Chinese schools for 25 years.

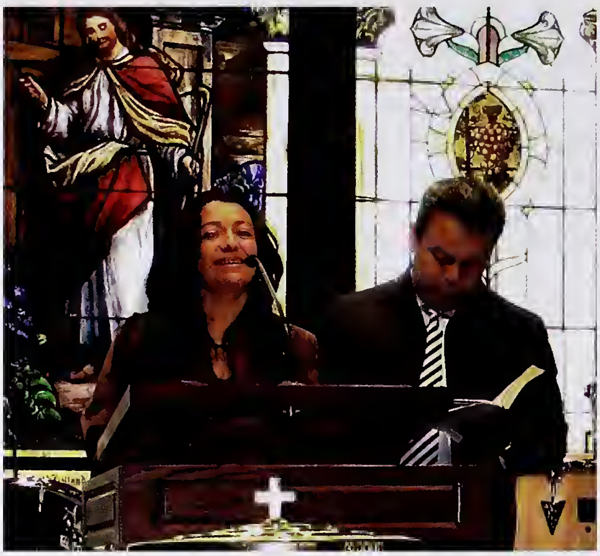
In October 2006 a group of 17 supporters visited China to review the program (see story above). —*Mennonite Mission Network*

Courtesy photo

Todd Hanson (left) visits a student in Nanchong

Growing relationship for two churches

Portland Mennonite Church hosts pastors from Colombian congregation.



Courtesy photo

Eduardo Bautista and Lucy Martinez, pastors of the Mennonite church in Anolaima, Colombia, preached at Portland Mennonite Church in November 2006.

Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church's relationship with a sister church in Anolaima, Colombia, grew by leaps and bounds through a recent visit from the Colombian pastoral couple Eduardo Bautista and Lucy Martinez. Now PMC has decided to arrange pen-pal connections and sponsor a year-long volunteer exchange. PMC will also continue its regular prayer, monthly letter and photo bulletin board featuring their partner.

The church to church relationship began in 2003, and the congregations want to celebrate the five-year anniversary of their partnership by sending a delegation from Portland to Anolaima in 2008. The congregation is also considering a way for the two youth groups to meet together at the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Paraguay in 2009.

"In November 2006, we hosted them in our homes, worshiped together, shared our congregational ministries and showed them some natural sights of Oregon," says Sue Glick, a Portland Mennonite Church member. The partnership started in 2003 through Justapaz, the peace and justice organization of the Colombian Mennonite Church.

"Over the years we have exchanged monthly emails," says Glick, "sent delegations to visit Anolaima and participated in advocacy to the U.S. government about policies affecting Colombia."

The most recent visit allowed Portland Mennonite Church to connect directly with Anolaima as Eduardo and Lucy joined small groups in homes for meals and conversation.

"They are personable people with good senses of humor," Glick says. "Eduardo and Lucy beamed of love for Christ, each other and others around them. Language was no barrier during the time we spent with them. It was as if they were lifelong friends."

Portland Mennonite Church members heard firsthand of their sister church's ministries. According to Glick, one person said, "I was most struck with Eduardo sharing about the work of their congregation, both in training about the family and his philosophy of Jesus the businessman and how they encourage members to start businesses and how that is affecting lives of members and the whole community."

Another important connection was with Ministerios Restauracion, a Hispanic congregation with whom Portland shares their church building, and other Spanish-speaking congregations in the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference.

Eduardo preached at a joint worship service with Ministerios Restauracion, and the two groups shared Communion and a fellowship meal together.

"We hope their relationship will continue," says Glick, "and we can have a three-way partnership."—*Portland Mennonite Church*

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

Kraybill honored at AMBS

In a surprise gesture during Pastors Week (see page 20), the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary board honored J. Nelson Kraybill for 10 years of service as president of the seminary. Presenting the gift are local members of the AMBS board: Randall Miller Jacobs (left) and Yvonne Diaz (right). J. Nelson and Ellen, his wife, received several gifts from the board, including a piece by Caribbean artist Luis Luma entitled, "Banana Jesus," which shows Jesus harvesting bananas.—*AMBS*

Mary E. Klassen

CALENDAR

The annual ***Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Youth Choir Festival Concert*** will be held March 11 at **Sauder Concert Hall**, Goshen College campus, Goshen, Ind.

Mennonite Health Assembly will be held March 29-April 1 in **Pittsburgh, Pa.**

Nov. 1-4, 2007, ***Business as a Calling 2006: Trust in a World of Change***. **Toronto, Ont.** Sponsored by Mennonite Economic Development Associates. For details, visit www.businessasacalling.org or call 1-800-665-7026.

WORKERS

Boggs, Aaron, was ordained as pastor of Crossroads Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va., on Feb. 18.

Bontrager-Singer, Kay, was licensed and installed as pastor at Faith Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on Jan. 14.

Buckwalter, Richard L., was installed as bishop/overseer of the Willow Street, Pa., and Strasburg, Pa., District on Jan. 1.

Carrion, Daniel, ended his term as pastor at Luz Verdadera, Reading, Pa., on Sept. 20, 2006.

Conrad, Rick A., was installed as interim lead pastor at Gingerichs Mennonite Church, Lebanon, Pa., on Dec. 12, 2006.

Fry, David W., was licensed as associate pastor at Ephrata Mennonite Church, Ephrata, Pa., on Jan. 1.

Handrich Schlabach, Joetta, was licensed for ministry at Faith Mennonite Church, Minneapolis, Minn., on Jan. 28.

Horning, J. Ronald, ended his term as youth pastor at Weaverland Mennonite Church, East Earl, Pa., on Dec. 31, 2006.

Thomas, Sam, ended an 18-year term as pastor at Landisville Mennonite Church, Landisville, Pa., on Jan. 31.

Tran, Quang X., retired as pastor at Vietnamese Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, Pa., on Dec. 11, 2006.

Weaver, Clair H., was installed as lead pastor at Kralls Mennonite Church, Labanon, Pa., on Dec. 10, 2006.

Weaver, Marvin L., ended his term as chaplain at Auntie Anne's Counseling Service, Witmer Heights Mennonite Church, Smoketown, Pa., on Dec. 31, 2006.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Blossom, Jesse Isaiah, Jan. 19, to Kent and Theresa Litwiller Blossom, Wellman, Iowa.

Crilow, Reese Noelle, Jan. 26, to Ryan and Tricia Dye Crilow, Wooster, Ohio.

Dare, Kaylie Renee, Jan. 30, to Michael and Lisa Litwiller Dare, Peoria, Ill.

Eby, Mackenzie Kate, Dec. 28, 2006, to Matthew and Katie Good Eby, Pocomoke, Md.

Epp, Caden Joseph, Jan. 30, to Marc and Tammi Larson Epp, Manhattan, Kan.

Graber, Willow Marie, Nov. 15, 2006, to Ron and Brandi Backer Graber, Carthage, Mo.

Lazer, Oona Sollilja, Nov. 9, 2006, to Zane and Margaret Heath Lazer, Marietta, Ohio.

Myers, Jacob Russel, Jan. 22, to Keith and Janet Kinsey Myers, Stryker, Ohio.

Roberts, Michael Dean, Jan. 19, to Dustin and Ann Zedrick Roberts, Buhler, Kan.

Shantz, Clay Robert, Dec. 29, 2006, to Tim and Lindsey Blosser Shantz, Harrisonburg, Va.

Showalter, Brianna Marie, Jan. 24, to Christopher and Laura Berkey Showalter, Harrisonburg, Va.

Springer, Noah Daniel, Jan. 17, to Eric and Sonia Gingerich Springer, Iowa City, Iowa.

Swartzendruber, Elena Grace, Jan. 27, to David and Lisa DiGiandomenico Swartzendruber, Bryn Mawr, Pa.

Swartzendruber, Emma Sue, Jan. 30, to Scott and Angie Pennypacker Swartzendruber, Bloomington, Ill.

Wagler, Abriana Grace, Feb. 3, to Eli and Jackie Wagler, Lima, Ohio.

MARRIAGES

Campbell/Moyers: Stephen Campbell, Broadway, Va., and Laura Moyers, Harrisonburg, Va., Nov. 18, 2006, at Valley View Mennonite Church, Criders, Va.

Gaiser/Kurtz: Mara Gaiser, Arvada Colo., and Frank Kurtz, Arvada, Sept. 30, 2006, at Arvada Mennonite Church, Arvada.

Gerber/Jaquet: Jolene Gerber, Kidron, Ohio, and Scott Jaquet, Orrville, Ohio, Dec. 30, 2006, at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Hogen/Walter: Janett Hogen, Sioux Falls, S.D., and Nathan Walter, Freeman, S.D., Dec. 1, 2006, at Augustana Chapel, Sioux Falls.

Hooley/Meyer: Sylvia Hooley, Canton, Ohio, and Nick Meyer, Kidron, Ohio, Dec. 23, 2006, at Kidron Mennonite Church, Kidron.

Huntsberger/Miller: Jenni Huntsberger, Orville, Ohio., and Anthony Miller, Orrville, Dec. 16, 2006, at Kidron Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

DEATHS

Burkey, Burdette, 88, Milford, Neb., Dec. 4, 2006. Spouse: Mary Burkey. Parents: Edd and Barbara Burkey. Children: Joan Schweitzer, Jerry, Kathy Stych; nine grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 6, at Beth-El Mennonite Church, Milford.

Claassen, Paul, 89, Beatrice, Neb., died Dec. 8, 2006, of a heart attack. Spouse: Ruby Claassen. Parents: J.J.R. and Christine Penner Claassen. Children: John, Alan, Rob, Nathan, Rhoda Frazer; 13 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 11 at Beatrice Mennonite Church.

Cortright, Mary Whisler, 94, Lancaster, Pa., died Jan. 25. Spouse: Russell H. Cortright (deceased). Parents: Benjamin and Mary Myers Whisler. Children: Carolyn Patrick, Constance Sheaffer, Christine Krentz, Charlotte Parsons, Cynthia Ross, Howard; 10 grandchildren; 32 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 30 at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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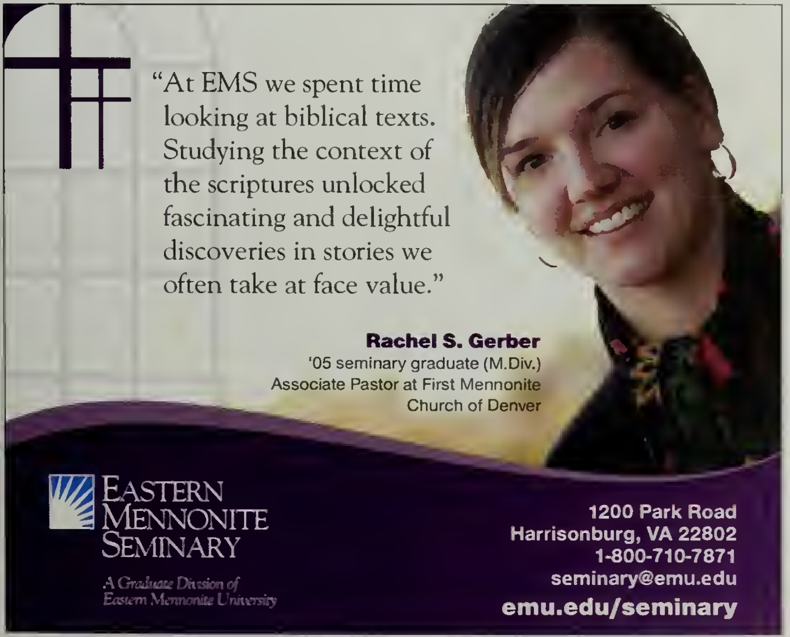
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"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

Cullar, Lillie Goering, 91, North Lima, Ohio, died Jan. 17 of cancer. Spouse: John Allen Cullar. Parents: John C. and Adina Wedel Goering. Funeral: Jan. 22 at Midway Mennonite Church, Columbiana, Ohio.

Freed, Arthur D., 81, Lansdale, Pa., died Jan. 17. Spouse: Cecelia Interrante Freed. Parents: Sylvanus and Margaret Hauck Freed. Children: Mary Ellen, Denise Mathuthtu, Arthur, Robert; two grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 22 at Huff & Lakjer Funeral Home, Lansdale.

Fretz, Grace Y., 92, Souderton, Pa., died Jan. 1. Parents: William D. and Hannah M. Yoder Fretz. Funeral: Jan. 6 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Garges, Carroll A., 82, Blooming Glen, Pa., died Jan. 18. Spouse: Verna Detweiler Garges. Parents: Howard and Mamie Anglemoyer Garges. Children: Cheryl Landis, Jeanelle Yoder; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 21 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen.

Gingerich, Mary Maple Berkshire, 80, Elkhart, Ind., died Dec. 18, 2006, of cancer. Spouse: Simon G. Gingerich. Spouse: Norman R. Berkshire (deceased). Parents: Newton and Mary E. Rose Maple. Children: N. James Berkshire, Mary Berkshire Stueben, Jeffrey A. Berkshire, George E. Berkshire. Funeral: Dec. 21 at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Graber, Elizabeth Alston, 92, Newton, Kan., died Jan. 19 of cancer. Spouse: Alvin D. Graber. Parents: Roy and Susan Wittrig Alston. Children: Lorene Kaufman, Lilah Bohn, Rodney, Lavonne Dyck; 10 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 26 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

Graber, Ruth Swartzendruber Leichty, 86, Wayland, Iowa, died Jan. 24 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: La Verne L. Graber. Spouse: Raymond Schlatter (deceased). Spouse: Leonard Leichty (deceased). Parents: Omar and Glenora Peden Swartzendruber. Children: Irvin Leichty, Elaine Canby; seven grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 27 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

Harnish, Donna Hartzler, 83, Tiskilwa, Ill., died Dec. 4, 2006, of dementia. Spouse: James R. Harnish. Parents: R.L. and Nora Hartzler. Children: Laurel Lindahl; 12 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 7 at Plow Creek Mennonite Church, Tiskilwa.

Heavener, Elenore, 70, Harleysville, Pa., died Jan. 11 of cancer. Parents: Guy and Alice L. Heavener. Funeral: Jan. 14 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville.

Homes, Elmer L., 92, Goshen. Ind., died Jan. 23 of natural causes. Spouse: Barbara M. Helmuth. Parents: Amos and Anna May Bixler Homes. Children: Randy E., Marlene Shank, Sand Birkey, Debra Krawiec; nine grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 27 at Yellow Creek Mennonite, Goshen.

Homes, Roy B., 89, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 22 of natural causes. Parents: Amos and Anna May Bixler Homes. Funeral: Jan. 27 at Yellow Creek Mennonite, Goshen.

Horst, Leroy D., 88, Ephrata, Pa., died Jan. 2. Spouse: Esther M. Horst. Parents: Ivan S. and Susan Wenger Horst. Children: Richard, Edwin, Edith Sauder, Elsie Horst, Janet Martin, Judy Hoover, Karen Weber, Mary Jane Martin, Christine Good; 21 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 8 at Ephrata Mennonite Church.

Hostetler, Garry D., 64, Inman, Kan., died Dec. 29, 2006, of heart failure. Spouse: Judy L. Hostetler. Parents: Ralph V. and Odena Miller Hostetler. Children: Kevin Ediger, Cherie Chasteen, Sonja Good; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 4 at Inman Mennonite Church.

Howe, Virigina L., 86, Lansdale, Pa., died Jan. 23 of natural causes. Spouse: Kenneth A. Howe. Parents: Adolf and Gertrude Fitzgerald Altman. Children: Nelson, Nancy Gingrich; three grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 27 at Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale.

Johns, Dewayne Joseph, 91, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 18. Spouse: Gladys Yoder Johns. Parents: Ray and Fannie Byler Johns. Children: Joan Mullet, Bonnie Hodge, John; six grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 22 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Kaufman, Walter J., 101, Freeman, S.D., died Jan. 2 of natural causes. Spouse: Anna Miller Kaufman (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Anna Gering Kaufman. Children: Duane, Gene, LeAnne Gross, Loren; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 8 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Mellinger, Edna Denlinger, 92, Lancaster, Pa., died Jan. 28. Spouse: Alvin K. Millinger (deceased). Parents: Emmanuel and Mary Eby Denlinger. Children: Ronald, Gordon, Joanne Mellinger, Mardel Mellinger; three grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 1 at Bachman Funeral Home, Strasburg, Pa.

Mendel, Katie Hofer, 99, Freeman, S.D., died Jan. 2 of natural causes. Spouse: Jacob J. Mendel (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Rebecca Hofer Hofer. Children: Lorriane Hofer, Laverne, Doris Schmidt; eight grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 5 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Reeves, Margaret Hazel Morgan, 72, Fort Wayne, Ind., died Jan. 2 of dementia. Spouse: T.J. Reeves (deceased). Parents: Mr. and Mrs. Jack Morgan. Children: Tom E., Linda G. Miller, Gloria A. Gunnerson; eight grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 5 at Maplewood Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne.

Senner, Robert William, 94, Lawrence, Kan., died Dec. 17, 2006, of natural causes. Spouse: Rachel Epp Senner. Parents: William and Elizabeth Graber Senner. Children: John, Rachel Wingen, Roberta Hofer, Stan; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 6 at Salem Mennonite, Freeman, S.D.

Vance, Margaret Jones, 90, Frederick, Pa., died Jan. 9. Spouse: Harry F. Vance (deceased). Parents: David and Ella Strouse Jones. Funeral: Jan. 14 at Providence Mennonite Church, Collegeville, Pa.

Zurcher, Elva Amstutz, 92, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died Jan. 1. Spouse: Allen Zurcher (deceased). Parents: Eli and Levina Amstutz. Children: Joyce Zurcher, Mildred Myers, Florence Benner, Glenford, Elvin; 13 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 6 at Kidron Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

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Goshen College invites applications for a full-time position: ***director of master's program*** in environmental education/professor of environmental education at Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center to begin in July 2007. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, B.C., is seeking a ***full-time associate pastor of youth and young adults***. This person will serve in a leadership team under the direction of the lead pastor. Although the primary responsibility will be to work with the youth and the youth leaders, an interest in providing leadership for the young adult small group would be considered a definite asset. The successful candidate will have a theological education, will agree with our church's vision statement and statement of faith and will have a passion for youth ministry. Starting date: July 2007; application deadline: March 31, 2007. Interested people are invited to visit our Web site for a complete job description and to submit a cover letter and resumé to: Youth Pastor Search Committee, Peace Mennonite Church, 11571 Daniels Road, Richmond, BC V6X 1M7; Phone: 604-278-0111; email: office@peacemennonite.ca; Web site: www.peacemennonite.ca.

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Hesston College seeks applicants for ***faculty positions in choral music and instrumental music***: woodwinds/brass. Master's degree and teaching experience required, doctorate preferred. Qualifications: innovative spirit; love for students; commitment to Mennonite higher education and the Mennonite church. Responsibilities may include classroom teaching in music theory, conducting and integrated arts. Candidates may apply for one or both positions. Positions available Aug. 1. Review of applications begins March 10 and continues until positions are filled. To apply, send curriculum vitae and personal faith statement to Bonnie Sowers, Interim Academic Dean, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062. Position descriptions available at www.hesston.edu/employment.

Bethany Christian Schools (gr. 6-12; enrollment 285) invites applications for 2007-08 for the position of ***athletic director***—70 percent load for the athletic director role and 30 percent for teaching in an area based on qualifications. Applicants should hold, or be qualified to obtain, Indiana licensure. To apply, submit a resumé and letter of application to Allan Dueck, Principal, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-5499. Phone: 574-534-2567; email: akdueck@bethanycs.net.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a ***full-time director of admissions***, beginning July 1 or when available. This person will develop, implement and monitor an overall strategy for recruitment of students for AMBS programs and oversee the director of financial aid. Qualifications include Christian commitment and passion for the mission of the Mennonite church, ability to communicate well and relate well to others, strong attention to details, proven supervisory and organizational skills, ability to think strategically and availability to travel 40-50 percent. Women and members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. To apply, send a resumé, three references and letter of application by April 1, 2007, to Ron Ringenberg, vice president, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, or rringenb@ambs.edu. See the job description at www.ambs.edu/employment/director-admissions.

Love nature and working with people? Do you have leadership skills you would like to use in a new way? **Camp Friedenswald** is seeking a person to serve as ***assistant to outdoor learning and program directors***. This is a voluntary service position with stipend, housing and insurance. Come and join us in the Peaceful Woods! Contact Justin Weaver, 269-476-9744 or justin@friedenswald.org.

Eastern Mennonite School (K-12), located in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley in Harrisonburg, Va., is in the search process for two key positions: ***high school teacher—U.S. history and government***—beginning in Fall 2007 and ***director of development***. This person will nurture community relationships and provide supervisory leadership for the fund-raising, admissions, communications and marketing staff. Desirable candidates will value church relationships, are successful fund-raisers, enjoy youth, create positive first impressions, are energetic, optimistic, encouraging and articulate in spoken and written language. Candidates should be available to begin employment between January and July 2007. Successful candidates will share a passion for Anabaptist-Mennonite education in a Christ-centered academic environment. Please express interest to Paul Leaman, Principal, 801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; email leamanp@emhs.net; phone 540-432-4502; www.emhs.net. Eastern Mennonite School offers a competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with experience and is an equal opportunity employer.

Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp seeks a ***capital project/volunteer coordinator*** to facilitate Vision 2012 Campaign projects. General construction and leadership skills are desired. Housing and stipend are offered as part of this one-year term (minimum). Please contact Corbin Graber, Executive Director, at 719-687-9506 or corbin@rmmc.org.

Native Mennonite Ministries is reshaping its staffing. We are looking for one or more ***part-time*** people. Skills needed: written communication/office organization; and relational/pastoral (willing to travel). Contact Willis Busenitz: willisnadine@juno.com; or Olivette McGhee: 251-368-5938.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.20 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership is seeking a ***half-time Web editor*** to join its communications team in Newton, Kan. The ideal candidate will be a quick learner with strong writing and editing skills as well as an ability to work well within a creative team atmosphere. Some Web design background and public relations or marketing experience are a plus. Spanish-speaking skills are highly desired, but not required. Those interested may submit a letter of intent, resumé and writing samples to Executive Leadership Human Resources at P.O. Box 347, Newton KS 67114, HR@MennoniteUSA.org or call 316-283-5155, ext. 249. Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership is an equal opportunity employer and encourages women and racial/ethnic people to apply.

***Full-time pastoral team leader*: Milverton Mennonite Fellowship** is a rural congregation on the edge of Milverton, Ont., approximately 40 minutes west of Kitchener/Waterloo. We are a congregation of varying ages, with an average attendance of 120 people. Our congregation places high value on worship, being Spirit led, prayer, missions (local and foreign). We seek a pastor who has gifts in the areas of team leadership, preaching, developing lay ministry, mission/evangelism, church growth. Position is available early summer. Reply in confidence by March 1 to: Muriel Bechtel, Conference Minister, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, 4489 King St. E., Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2.

MCC urgent opening: ***East Coast director***, Akron, Pa. Needed May 1. Must possess strong organizational and leadership skills. Must embrace Anabaptist faith acceptable to the diverse MCC constituency; be able to build and coordinate a staff team of 30-40 individuals and relate to urban and suburban/rural constituency. Contact Becky Stahly, rss@mcc.org, or call 717-859-1151 for job description and further information. Letter of interest and resumé should be sent by Feb. 15.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks four ***event pastors***, two male and two female, for !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth. The position is full-time for one of two time periods: June 7-June 30 or July 6-July 28, with several additional days of preparation. Pastors accompany the high school participants for the 18-day group experience. Qualifications include experience as a congregational pastor and working with youth; ability to nurture youth through times of spiritual, intellectual and emotional growth; creativity in styles of worship, prayer and spiritual disciplines; knowledge of and commitment to the Anabaptist/Mennonite faith; and an undergraduate degree with additional seminary education preferred. Responsibilities include assisting in preparations, leading and directing worship and discussions, and being physically, emotionally and mentally present with youth. To apply, send resumé and letter of application by Feb. 28 to Andy Brubacher Kaethler, !Explore Director, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, andybk@ambs.edu. A complete job description is available on the AMBS Web site: www.ambs.edu/employment/event-pastor.

Lititz Area Mennonite School, a K-8 Christian school in Lititz, Pa., serving 305 students, is looking for a ***head administrator*** for the 2007-2008 school year. The position requires great organizational and managerial skill as well as academic knowledge and a vision for educational excellence. Candidate must have a passion for Christian education and excellent communication and relational skills. Leadership in Christian school administration is a plus. Bachelor's degree in school administration or education required, preferably a master's degree. Send inquiry or resumé to: Matt Burkholder, Search Committee Coordinator, Lititz Area Mennonite School, 1050 East Newport Road, Lititz, PA 17543; 717-626-9551, email lamsoff@dejazzd.com.

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Goshen College is inviting applications for a ***full-time tenure-track position in the biology department***. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Hesston College seeks a ***resident director*** for the men's residence hall. A member of the student life team, the resident director provides leadership and oversight for operation of Hesston College's primary men's dormitory, which houses up to 138 students. Resident director is a full-time position during the school year, with summers off. The successful candidate will be a role model and mentor for students; select, train and supervise student staff and assist in enforcement of campus lifestyle standards. Qualifications include strong Christian faith, commitment to the Mennonite church and to the mission of Hesston College, leadership ability, and listening and relational skills. Bachelor's degree or higher preferred. Apply by resumé to Lamar Roth, Dean of Students, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; email lamarr@hesston.edu or call 620-327-8235 for information. Review of applicants will begin March 1 and continue until the position is filled. EOE.

English conversation teachers needed. **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a ***registrar***, beginning May 1. The position is 80 percent FTE. This person will maintain all academic records for the seminary, monitor student progress, manage class schedules, provide statistical reports and assist students with registration. Qualifications include skills in administration, ability to work with people, familiarity with higher education systems, knowledge of relational database management, strong computer skills and a bachelor's degree (master's degree preferred). Women, members of racial and ethnic groups, and members of other underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. To apply, send a letter of application, curriculum vitae and three references by Feb. 16 to Loren L. Johns, academic dean, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, or ljohns@ambs.edu. See the job description at www.ambs.edu/employment/registrar.

Employment opportunity for Christian couple: **Lakewood Retreat**, Brooksville, Fla., seeks ***full-time camp administrator*** to provide leadership for overall operation. The successful candidates will have the following skills: Christian, Mennonite or related Anabaptist camp administration experience desired, appreciation for outdoors, people skills, business and financial knowledge, marketing and public relations skills, computer skills. The job includes relating to sponsoring Mennonite churches and marketing the 114-acre camp/retreat with overnight facilities for families and special interest groups up to 250 people. Lakewood's purpose is "sharing God's love through service by providing a setting to experience Jesus Christ." Interested people may send their resumé to search committee chair, Arthur Wise, 5520 Antoinette St., Sarasota, FL 34232, email ArthurCWise@aol.com, phone 941-377-3104.

Executive director needed for **Black Rock Retreat**, Lancaster, Pa. Position provides organization-wide leadership for 60-room conference center, summer camp, outdoor education and elder hostel programs. Submit resumé to: Dan Hess, LMA Consulting Group, Fax 717-509-8879 or email info@LMAsystems.com.

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Lessons from the best films of 2006

Gordon Houser

While the best feature films do not set out to teach lessons, we can still draw helpful insights from them. Here are some lessons from my top films of 2006 (see list below).

Films often reflect the issues current in the world of their audiences. One of those issues is the pervasive violence around the world. Cinema is filled with images of violence, and many of these are gratuitous, i.e. not germane to the story but for the "pleasure" of the audience. Many of the films on my list show violence, but it is portrayed more as a problem than as an answer.

Susan Mark Landis (page 8) discusses the "myth of redemptive violence" that pervades our culture. Many of these films tend to judge rather than reinforce that myth.

For example, *Letters from Iwo Jima* (my #1) shows the effects of war on Japanese soldiers left to die on the island of Iwo Jima. It contradicts our tendency to see these "enemies" as inhuman or uninterested in living. It shows the ugliness of war and how fickle our political loyalties can be.

United 93 (my #2) helps us in our grief work after 9/11. By reenacting many of the events of that day in a realistic rather than propagandistic manner, the film serves as a kind of catharsis, helping us relive that day and grieve rather than seek revenge.

Pan's Labyrinth (#3) looks at violence through the eyes of a young girl. In her imagination, she faces three tests from a faun. In one she overcomes fear, in another she is tempted by forbidden food and fails, and in a third she learns self-sacrifice, all Christian virtues from a film that does not claim to be Christian.

The Queen (#4) offers lessons in leadership. Queen Elizabeth II practices dignity and discipline but learns to adjust to the needs of her people.

By focusing on a future world with no children, *The Children of Men* (#5) shows us the redeeming effect children have on our world and the importance of hope in living an ethical life.

The Departed (#6) comes closest to being an exception to my point about violence. As with other films by Scorsese, it can seem excessive. And while the film may tempt audiences to root for revenge, it shows the tribal violence and betrayal of gang war and greed. And the writing is terrific.

While it satirizes the glitz of beauty pageants for young girls, *Little Miss Sunshine* (#7) is really about how the love of a family helps each member deal with the death of their dreams.

Babel (#8) reflects our globalized world, weaving together stories set in Morocco, Mexico, Japan and the United States. As the title implies, the film shows the ill effects of failed communication. It also shows how government bureaucracies based on fear lead to other problems and destroy people's lives.

I've written about *An Inconvenient Truth* (#9), the only documentary on the list and meant to teach a lesson about global warming (see July 18, 2006).

As you watch films, look for insights you may find helpful.

BEST BOOKS OF 2006

Dissident Discipleship: A Spirituality of Self-Surrender, Love of God and Love of Neighbor by David Augsburger

The Echo Maker: A Novel by Richard Powers

The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11 by Lawrence Wright

A Precarious Peace: Yoderian Explorations on Theology, Knowledge and Identity by Chris K. Huebner

What About Hitler? Wrestling with Jesus' Call to Nonviolence in an Evil World by Robert W. Brimlow

BEST FILMS OF 2006

1. **Letters from Iwo Jima**
2. **United 93**
3. **Pan's Labyrinth**
4. **The Queen**
5. **The Children of Men**
6. **The Departed**
7. **Little Miss Sunshine**
8. **Babel**
9. **An Inconvenient Truth**
10. **Volver**

FILMS

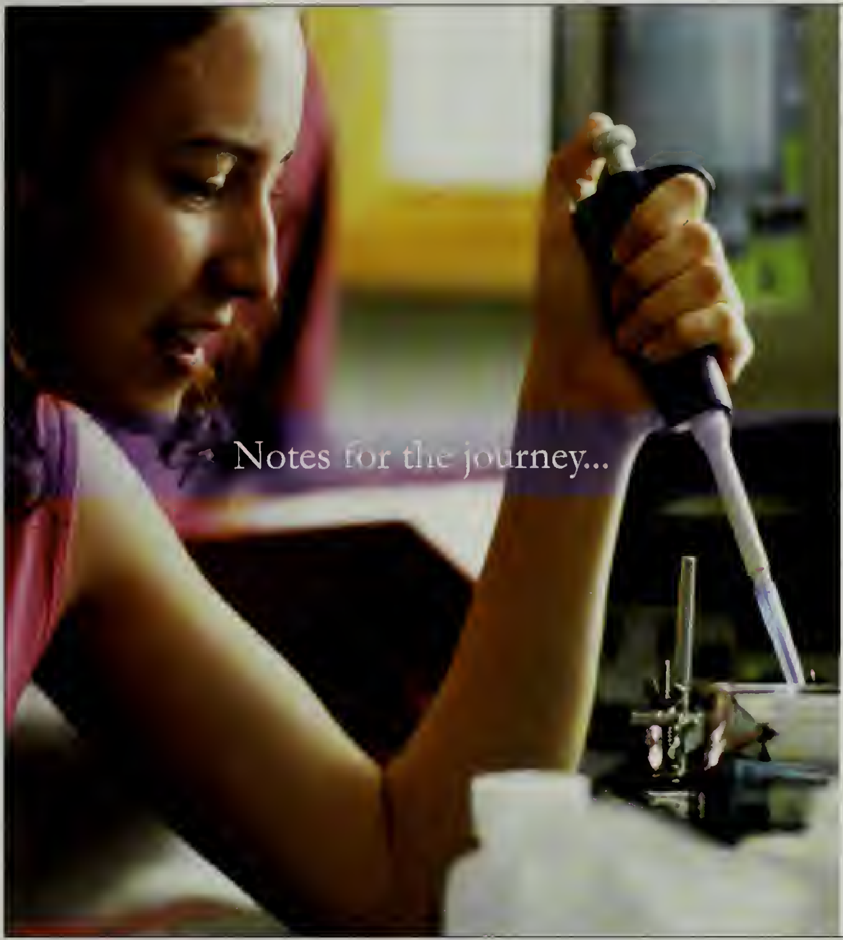
Letters from Iwo Jima (R) explores the famous World War II battle from the Japanese point of view (and in Japanese) and shows that war affects human beings who live rich, complex lives. The acting and photography match perfectly the sense of impending doom and people's longing for life.

The Children of Men (R) is set in 2027 in a world with no children under 18. This fast-paced film feels contemporary, with its pervading anxiety, the government's arrests of outsiders and sudden bomb blasts on the street. By the end, however, fear and violence are confronted by innocence and hope. The film's Christian themes, less overt than the book's, add to its effect.

Pan's Labyrinth (R) is set in Spain in 1944. This beguiling Spanish-language film blends magic and cruel reality as a young girl faces tests from a faun and seeks escape from her fascist stepfather. It helps us see both the surreal horror of violence and the power of imagination. Only the latter brings true hope.

BOOKS

A Precarious Peace: Yoderian Explorations on Theology, Knowledge and Identity by Chris K. Huebner (Herald Press, 2006, $18.99) poses a formidable challenge to mainstream accounts of Christian pacifism. Huebner writes that Christian pacifism, like the military, "all too often speaks as if it has a monopoly on peace." Instead, he says, the church should speak of "the peace of Christ, which, as a gift, is precisely out of control." The book seeks to clarify John Howard Yoder's work while emphasizing that Yoder did not develop positions. Huebner argues that "a sense of precariousness, ambiguity and unsettlement is an essential characteristic of what it means to be Mennonite." This is an important book worthy of much discussion, but the audience will be limited by the at times dense language and academic tone.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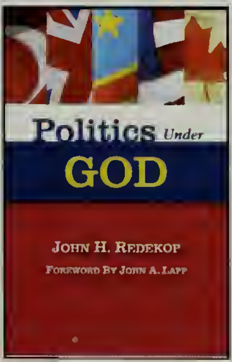

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Everett J. Thomas

Force or violence

force \n\: strength or energy exerted or brought to bear

violence \n\: exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse

I thought a lot about force and violence during a 12-week Citizens' Academy course offered by our local police department. I was interested in knowing what our town's policies were regarding the use of force—especially lethal force.

Use of force policies are not uniform from one city to another. In our city, the lowest levels on the continuum of force are "officer presence" and verbal commands. For nearly 90 percent of all cases, these low levels are sufficient. But when an officer's presence and commands are not enough to control the situation, the officer can move quickly to strike with his or her hands, use pepper spray or strike with a metal baton. If those responses do not control the situation, then the police officer can use lethal force—either with the "nightstick" or firearm. The officer is free to jump to any level of force at any time required by the situation.

But how can shooting someone be called "force" instead of "violence"? Is it possible to fire a bullet into another person's body while maintaining a kind of objectivity that does not wish to injure or abuse the recipient's personhood?

This seems to be the expectation in law enforcement. It is also the reason police officers often need counseling after they shoot another person. Their "peace officer" training instills in them a calling to keep the peace in the community. But shooting another person—required by the action of the perpetrator—leaves them in a moral dilemma.

Fortunately, 90 percent of police officers never fire their weapons as a use of force during their entire careers. But in our town we added another option for police officers: Tasers®. Using an electric stun gun rarely injures the person "tased" and allows law enforcement to establish complete control over a troublemaker.

So what is the difference between force and violence? If there is a difference between the two, can we apply the distinction to our responsibilities as members of a peace church who are also U.S. citizens? Yes. We can advocate for the force of law while making our country less violent.

The difference is in two little words: "so as" (see definitions above). The reason we use force makes the difference; if our intentions are to injure or abuse, then it is violence.

In parenting, we can be forceful with our children without being abusive. Children need to go to bed at a certain time; good parenting requires forceful insistence at bedtime. The resistance of a strong-willed child can be overcome by the moral strength implicit in the parental role—without injuring the child physically or emotionally.

Good law enforcement carries the same assumption. We want police officers to use force without abusing or injuring the person out of control. When law enforcement forgets this distinction—as in the March 1991 Rodney King episode in Los Angeles—most of us see it as violence.

One calling as a peace church is to let law enforcement agencies in our communities know that we expect their use of force to injure as little as possible. We can also let our representatives in Congress know that we expect a foreign policy that does as little violence as possible to other nations. Doing so may mean supporting a United Nations peacekeeping force in Darfur to stop the massacre of Sudanese civilians by government-supported militias. At the same time we can say U.S. foreign policy that took us into Iraq has done nothing but injure and abuse the Iraqi people and their culture. Diplomacy and economic sanctions—a kind of international "tasing"—worked in the standoff with North Korea last year. Why not do the same with Iran and Syria this year?

Whether or not we intend to injure and abuse another country distinguishes our country's actions as either force or violence. As citizens of a country whose foreign policy has created long-term civil war in Iraq, now is the time for us to articulate what we believe. Careful use of words will demonstrate to those setting policy that peace church members understand the use of force but demand respect for those against whom force is required by the international community.—*ejt*

If our intentions are to injure or abuse, then it is violence.

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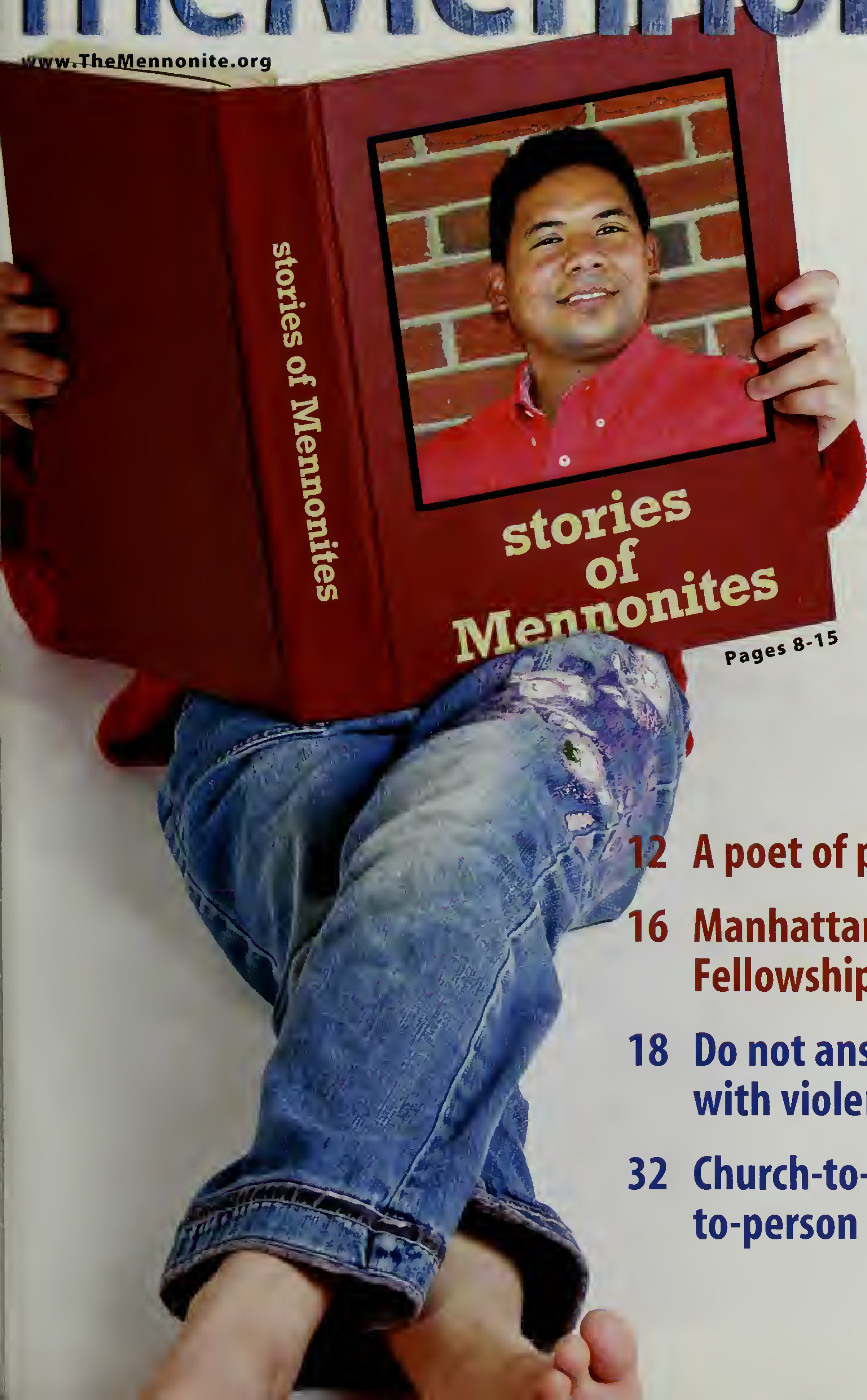

stories of Mennonites

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Of what spirit are you?

Kenneth Thompson is pastor of Friendship Community Church, Bronx, N.Y.

An outcry arose over the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of a young man (see Jan. 16, page 6). On the eve of his wedding day, police officers, whose sworn duty is to protect life, took his. The incident was one more example of an African-American man suffering from the excessive use of deadly force. Tens of thousands of people angrily called out for justice. Shouldn't we add our voices to theirs? Shouldn't we eagerly move to act for the peace we so earnestly pray for? Shouldn't we speak prophetically to the powers that be, urging them to heed the truths we Christians espouse? I wrestled with those questions as pastor of a church, as a board member of African American Mennonite Association and intercultural relations committee and as a black man.

Peace as a basic tenet of Anabaptist history and Mennonite faith expression positions us to serve the purposes of God in our time and in our world. Our active sense of the presence of God, and the kingdom as taught by Jesus Christ, gives us a vibrant spirituality, a distinct identity. It is a mistake to think our nonviolent idealism translates into a noninvolvement that detaches us from the reality of human experience. Our sense of beloved community, understanding what directly affects one indirectly affects all, won't allow that mistake.

How then should we respond to injustice? Luke 9:52-55 tells of an injustice suffered and how the disciples initially reacted. Jesus corrected their attitude and called them to have moral integrity in what they do. He corrected their theology, which mistook judgment for justice, condemnation for conviction, retribution for restitution and might for right. The spirit of Christ elevates our "Pray for Peace, Act for Peace" slogan to the higher "Pray for Peace, Act in Peace." Remember what spirit we are of. Our interest is allegiance to Immanuel, not alignment with issues, of being directed by Christ of the cross, not driven by crisis in causes.

Rather than add our voices to the angry outcry of the dissatisfied and distressed we use our voice to express the love of God in Jesus Christ. More of us should strive to speak pastorally and passionately of God's peace and intentional community.

Jesus in Luke 9:55-56 reveals the correct motivation for action, and Luke 10:33-35 reveals the constructive methods for action. Don't limit the reign of God in the earth to simply aiding the bruised and wounded. Those acts, however meaningful, are momentary. Work as peacemakers in the spirit of Christ to transform society, transforming those structures that leave people wounded and bruised. That's significant and eternal.

Raise your sights to rescue the wounded and repair Jericho's road, making it safe. Bring together affected citizens, local authorities, municipal leaders and reconcile them. Supply the need of those on the road who have not, and develop relationships with the innkeepers along Jericho's road who have, and reconcile the two. Bandage the bruised and develop relationships with the medical community so that medical care is accessible to all in need. Protect the lives of those who travel Jericho's road by protecting the future of the children; educate and empower at-risk youth so they don't grow up and succumb to the temptation of getting quick money by risking the lives of others. Ronnie Pride, pastor of Fellowship of Christ Church in Rocky Mount, N.C., says: "The gospel is more than making people feel better—it means making better people."

If we hope to realize the liberating themes of the gospel shaped by the reign of God in our world we must respond to conflict with inspired emotion and intelligent compassion.

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Profile mixes apples and oranges

The results from the 2006 Mennonite Member Profile (Feb. 6) are intriguing. But I question the accuracy (or interpretation) of two of the reported results. The profile reveals that attendance at church more than once a week and at Sunday school are both significantly down since 1972. Conrad Kanagy fears this means a serious drop in church involvement. However, since 1972 there has been an explosion in congregational small groups that meet in members' homes. How much does this offset the decline in Sunday school or midweek services? Also I find it hard to believe that a much smaller percentage of Mennonites are under age 45 (30 percent) than is true in mainline Protestant denominations (42 percent). I suspect that a common category (membership?) is being interpreted differently, resulting in an invalid apples and oranges comparison.—*Ryan Ahlgrim, Indianapolis*

Kanagy responds

Thank you for these questions. Here are my responses: In 1989, 63 percent of members attended Sunday school every Sunday, and 44 percent of members were involved in a small group that met regularly. In 2006, 53 percent attended Sunday school weekly and 38 percent participated in a small group that meets at least two or three times per month. Using these measures, both Sunday school attendance and small group participation have declined since 1989. While I am not sure what differences in membership definition Ahlgrim suggests, any meaningful differences—should they exist—do not invalidate the 35-year decline in proportion of Mennonites of childbearing age. Regardless of whom we compare ourselves with, the reality of this decline remains. —*Conrad Kanagy, Church Members Profile 2006*

Number of young Mennonites will decline

Re the Feb. 6 issue and the latest profile of Mennonite Church USA members: Most disheartening was the statistic that now the number of Mennonites under age 45 is only 30 percent, a number declining by 24 percent since 1972. As I continued to read on I came to the news story, "Recommendation to Ordain Women Fails."

Something is wrong when we as a denomination encourage new leadership, educate women for ministry in our church schools, then follow that up by refusing ordination to women in one of our own conferences. As a young woman who attended a Mennonite college for training in pastoral ministry, I and my husband entered into conversation with conference ministers when seeking a pastoral placement. During one conversation I was asked whether or not if we were called to a congregation I would be OK with having the same responsibilities as my spouse but not holding the title of pastor. Refusal to ordain these women is not a far leap—a subtle form of emotional abuse that needs to be addressed by Mennonite Church USA leadership. If we continue to allow "differing scriptural understandings" to suppress others, we can expect the number of young, energetic, educated members to continue to decline. I have to give careful thought to belonging to a denomination that allows this type of abuse to continue.—*Lyz Weaver, Cassopolis, Mich.*

Ordination decision also hurts men

In the Feb. 6 article that reports Executive Board member responses to the Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference vote on ordination for women, Samuel Lopez indicated he feels the pain of the women—and women's pain about this decision is surely paramount. But this vote's impact is broader than that. I am a man who has been nurtured and strengthened in my faith by growing up in a congregation with a woman pastor. As we all reflect on the vote, I hope we do not think or act as if women will be the only ones hurt by this decision.—*Jason Shenk, Goshen, Ind.*

Do away with ordination?

I am disappointed that Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference, where I am a member, decided to maintain an unbiblical pattern of discrimination in church leadership based on gender. Unfortunately, that will deprive Lancaster Conference of the ministry of gifted women and will discourage young

IN THIS ISSUE

We regularly receive tributes to Mennonites from writers who believe accounts about the lives of those faithful members would edify the church. Two articles reveal the contributions made by men whose deaths are separated by decades: Fred Schmidt (page 11) and Walter E. Yoder (page 14). Rarely does someone come forward and ask us to feature them. But that happened when Luis Padilla stopped in our Goshen, Ind., offices nearly two years ago and recounted his life story. So we commissioned an article about him (page 8). We also occasionally discover a person whose story needs to be told, and Anna Groff offers a profile of Japanese Mennonite poet Yorifumi Yaguchi (page 12). We feature other Mennonites in this issue as well: A congregational profile (pages 16-17) provides a glimpse at some Mennonites in Manhattan (N.Y.) Mennonite Fellowship, and Groff's news story (page 20) introduces us to more Congolese Mennonites.—*Editor* women from following God's call to ministry. It has already led some people not to join congregations in the conference. Perhaps some individuals and congregations will leave.

In addition, this decision reflects a pattern of biblical interpretation that is dangerous and maintains ordination as a status symbol. It is troubling that one-third of Lancaster Conference's credentialed leadership who voted interprets the Bible in a way that supports this policy. They seem to take a few statements limiting the role of women literally while ignoring other statements, the practice of the early church and the broader teaching of the New Testament, which support women in leadership. They do not consider the context of statements seeming to limit the roles of women and pick and choose what they want to do by ignoring clear statements in the same passages. For example, we do not prohibit "braiding hair." If women "must be silent," what would happen to congregational singing? Could single women be saved if we took literally the statement that "women will be saved through childbearing"? Our schools, church agencies and mission programs would disintegrate if women were not allowed to "teach or have authority over a man" (1 Timothy 2:12).

It is ironic that ordination becomes the place to draw the line when ordination is never mentioned in the New Testament in the way it is practiced in Lancaster Conference. Maybe to be more biblical, there should be no ordination at all. Perhaps currently ordained men should relinquish their ordination.—*John W. Eby, Dillsburg, Pa.*

'Enemy love' instead of pacifism

I commend Ted Grimsrud for his letter (Feb. 6) attempting to rescue from caricature the view that enemy love is a serious option for everyone to follow. Given our experience and our heritage, we think of this as a religious teaching, rooted in how God in Christ has regarded us. But isn't it also a wise teaching, reflecting the recognition that in many situations our well-being is inextricably connected with our enemy's? Both Grimsrud's letter and the article to which he responded used "pacifism" as the jumping off point. That word, with its propositional and declarative qualities, demands that people choose one road or the other. If we instead use a phrase such as enemy love, we may find it easier to turn the focus from ourselves and our righteousness toward the salvation that God in Christ is bringing to pass for all creation.—*Berry Friesen, Lancaster, Pa.*

World War I lesson for today

The Road to Delhi by Arthur McPhee is an account of Bishop Pickett, a Methodist missionary statesman to India in the early 20th century. Bishop Pickett's unique Christian response to World War I is so appropriate for today. He labeled himself "next to a pacifist" and called war "the worst kind of violence." Pickett reminded his readers of the cost of World War I—not just financially but in the loss of life, morality and spiritual values.

"There is no excuse for such an orgy of violence," he said. "Men and women of every faith should join to attack the war spirit and all that provokes it and continue that attack until war preparation shall cease and permanent peace based on mutual respect, tolerance, equal justice and fair dealings for all people shall have been established throughout the earth."

What was true then is more so today. It is time for us as believers and the church to declare loudly our allegiance to the Christ, the Prince of Peace, the one we serve and follow.—*LeRoy Bechler, Upland, Calif.*

Hearing about Palestinians

Thanks for printing Timothy Seidel's "The 'Living Stones' of Bethlehem" (Dec. 19, 2006). We do not hear enough of this side of the story. Many thanks, and blessings on Timothy.—*Wilma Shank, Goshen, Ind.*

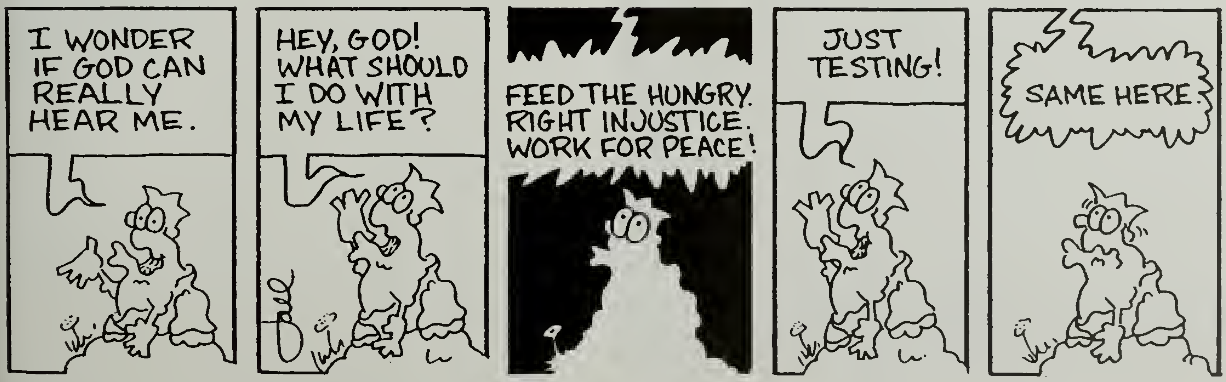
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

During the season of Lent: (65 votes)

- ○ I always give up something. (14%)
- ○ I occasionally give up something. (35%)
- ○ I will give up something this year for the first time. (2%)
- ○ I do not observe the Lenten season. (49%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


I WONDER IF GOD CAN REALLY HEAR ME.
HEY, GOD! WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY LIFE?
FEED THE HUNGRY. RIGHT INJUSTICE. WORK FOR PEACE!
JUST TESTING!
SAME HERE.

IN BRIEF

Hartzler named Mennonite Financial head

The board of directors of Mennonite Financial, Lancaster, Pa., has named W. Kent Hartzler as president and CEO of the 52-year-old Anabaptist credit union. Hartzler succeeds Larry Miller, who left Dec. 31, 2006, to become president of Mennonite Mutual Aid. Hartzler has been with Mennonite Financial for nine years, most recently serving as vice president for lending and business development. Previously he was the credit union's director of marketing. The credit union ended 2006 with more than $77.8 million in assets, a 7 percent growth over the previous year. Membership grew by 8 percent in 2006 for a total of 9,424. *—J. Lorne Peachey*

Words to live by

"Forgo anger, tobacco, intoxication and gluttony in favor of exercise, humility, charity, prayer and patience," says Nicholas Kao Se-tsean, who at 110 years old is one of the world's oldest Roman Catholic priests, on his secrets for long life. *—The Christian Century*

U.S. religious delegation visits Iran

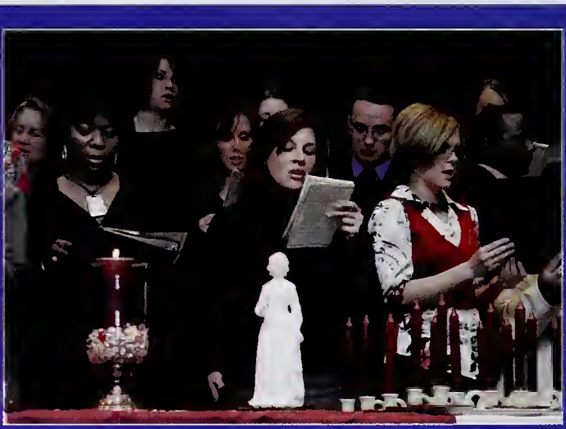
TEHRAN, Iran—In the first meeting of its kind since the 1979 Islamic revolution, a group of Americans met with a sitting Iranian president in Iran on Feb. 24.

The 2½-hour meeting took place at the presidential residence of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and included a 13-member U.S. religious delegation and members of the president's staff and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The group discussed a variety of topics, including the role of religion in transforming conflict, Iraq, nuclear proliferation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The delegation found most encouraging from the meeting with President Ahmadinejad a clear declaration from him that Iran has no intention to acquire or use nuclear weapons and a statement that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be solved through political, not military means.

The meeting culminated six days of meetings with Iranian religious and government leaders and informal conversations with Iranians at universities, churches, mosques, shops and on the street.

The delegation included leaders from Mennonite, Quaker, Episcopal, Catholic and United Methodist churches as well as representatives of the National Council of Churches, Sojourners/Call to Renewal and Pax Christi.—*MCC*



Vada Snider/Bethel College

Letting their light shine

The Bethel College (North Newton, Kan.) Department of Nursing held its annual lamplighting for junior nursing students Feb. 11. Director of nursing Gregg Schroeder said this is the most diverse class ever, with nine men and 18 foreign-born students from Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Laos, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo and Vietnam. Front row, from left: Victoria Charles (originally from Nigeria), Rebecca Claassen, Chelsea Corwin; back row: Sally Thiesen, Sarah Thompson, Evan Meyer, Thomas Morse and Nicholas Mwangi (originally from Kenya).—*Bethel College*

Beninese health center wins award

COTONOU, Benin—Under the leadership of Raphael Edou and a 30-member council of churches in Benin, West Africa, the clinic that began as a single rented room has become an internationally recognized organization.

At an awards dinner on Jan. 15 at the Global Development Network conference in Beijing, China, the Japanese government awarded Bethesda Health Centre a $50,000 grant for the "Most Innovative Development Project." Before nearly 600 individuals representing more than 93 countries, Edou shared about the mission and work of Bethesda.

"[Our] small beginning helped us to grow step by step," he said. "Bethesda's staff fears God and avoids corruption. We don't merely do something for our salary. We want to reach people in need."

The conference explores original and imaginative approaches to development. Edou said Bethesda will use the grant to conduct surveys and develop their current programming as well as be more directly involved in the United Nations "Millennium Campaign" to cut the number of Africans living beneath the poverty line in half by 2015.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Anabaptist Network a tool for young adults

HARRISONBURG, Va.—The Anabaptist Network, an online networking tool for young adults in Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, works to link young adult events within Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA and make connections across ethnic, racial and economic divides.

Begun as a conversation at a meeting of the Young Adult Fellowship, an organized partnership between young adults and young adult ministry in Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA, in South Bend, Ind., in October 2006, the network was also partly inspired by Tim Nafziger's work with the Anabaptist Network in the United Kingdom.

Anabaptist Network takes form as a group on the global Internet networking tool Facebook. "Since many Anabaptist young adults already use Facebook, we saw this as a sustainable approach, as well as an option for future global Anabaptist networking possibilities," says Hinke Loewen-Rudgers, who works for Mennonite Church Canada and volunteers time to the project.

The network plans to publish formal events—conference gatherings—while allowing registered users to submit events such as hymn sings or afternoon hiking trips.

Transient young adults, who may feel distant

Jim Bishop

tz Blitz' at EMU puts together health kits

mid Arsalan Abrahimpeur, an Eastern Mennonite University shman from Afghanistan, ties a health kit in an assembly e during a "Kitz Blitz" held Feb. 16 as part of Mission Service ys on the Harrisonburg, Va., campus. The kits will be sent to nnonite Central Committee, Akron, Pa., for distribution to ople living in disaster sites, refugee camps and war zones. *astern Mennonite University*

from the Mennonite church, have expressed a need for support and networking, Loewen-Rudgers says. To join the Anabaptist Network community, go to www.facebook.com, register an account and search for the group "Anabaptist Network." This is open to anyone interested, not just young adults. *—Anna Groff*

Flores to lead missional church effort

Gilberto Flores

NEWTON, Kan.—Gilberto Flores, longtime denominational minister and director of the Instituto Biblico Anabautista (IBA), on Feb. 1 assumed a new role as director of missional church advancement for the denomination with Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership.

Flores will serve as a missional church catalyst for Executive Leadership staff and work with conference ministers and churchwide agencies throughout Mennonite Church USA.

Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, says Flores' new role will be to help all parts of the church reach toward their goal to become a missional church.

Flores was formerly a Mennonite pastor in Guatemala and academic dean of the Mennonite seminary SEMILLA in Guatemala City, before joining the former General Conference Mennonite Church staff as director of Hispanic resource ministries. More recently, he has served as director of IBA for Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership.

Flores will help develop a theological foundation for helping all parts of the church become a missional church community. His role is to be a connector and enabler of people and programs. He will work collaboratively with other staff in the churchwide system including the missional church development staff in Mennonite Mission Network.

Flores will continue to serve as a denominational minister with area conferences and provide consultation for the ministerial leadership system. He'll also work with racial/ethnic leaders to help adapt missional church strategies into multiple cultural settings.

The IBA training program for Hispanic leaders will continue under direction of Mennonite Education Agency and support from the Mission Network. Flores will continue to serve as a consultant to the program.*—Mennonite Church USA*

Bluffton debuts online literary journal

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Bluffton University's English department has created an online literary journal, *Inspiration Point*, to publish the work of Bluffton's student writers. The Webzine has been made possible by the Pathways to Mission and Vocation Project with generous funding by the Lilly Endowment Inc., and can be viewed at www.bluffton.edu/courses/tlc/bandishc/bulitjournal/index.htm.

Inspiration Point is designed and edited by English professors Cynthia L. Bandish and Susan S. Carpenter and stems from Bandish's desire to use the Internet. The English department also publishes *Shalith*, an annual literary magazine filled with poetry, fiction, essays and artwork by students and faculty.*—Bluffton University*

Mennonite church supports Harding ministry

NEWTON, Kan.—Pike Mennonite Church, Elida, Ohio, says its pastor, Philip K. Clemens, has committed $4,000 per year over the next five years to support the ministry of Dorothy and Curtis Harding, whose Lifting Jesus Higher Outreach for 33 years has worked with people in Los Angeles, Mobile, Ala., and Atlanta affected by drugs and gang violence. The Hardings are moving their work to Saginaw, Mich.

Dorothy Harding sang at the Atlanta 2003 convention of Mennonite Church USA. She is available at jesusway144@msn.com.*—Gordon Houser, with Dorothy Harding and Philip K. Clemens*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Mennonite Your Way Directory updated

The Mennonite Your Way Directory is a hospitality directory listing nearly 1,600 Mennonites, Brethren and other Christians of like spirit, in 54 countries, who offer lodging in their homes on a "for a donation" basis. Now in its 30th year the Directory continues the long Anabaptist traditions of courtesy, fellowship and hospitality to travelers. To order the 96-page directory, go to www.mennoniteyourway.com, phone 847-949-6179, write MYW, 80 West Sylvan Drive, Mundelein, IL 60060-3315 or myw@mywdirectory.com. Those wishing to receive a copy can register as a "host family" or simply use the directory for their personal travel. New hosts can now be added at anytime. New this year is a service providing updates by email. *—Jay and Glola Basler*

Numbers: water and war days

- Amount of money spent per year worldwide on bottled water: $100 billion
- Amount per year needed to meet the United Nations' goal of giving everyone access to drinkable water by 2015: $11.3 billion
- Number of days U.S. troops fought in World War II: 1,347
- Number of days U.S. troops fought in the Iraq War by Nov. 30, 2006: 1,348*—Yes!*

Jim Bishop

Not an impossible dream

by Jim Bishop

For Luis A. Padilla, 40, of Broadway, Va., the American dream of poverty-to-success is not impossible. It is his life story.

The son of Luis Alonso and Fany Padilla and second oldest of four siblings, Luis started working full-time in his home country of Honduras when he was just 14. He was an office boy, a "gopher" by day, and attended school evenings, Monday through Friday. He completed his high school studies at age 18 in 1985.

He dreamed of coming to the United States to attend college, well aware of the obstacles. His family had little money, and he wanted to speak English well enough not to depend on a translator. To that end, he took daily English classes nearly four years.

In 1989, Luis came to the United States with the International Visitors Exchange Program of Mennonite Central Committee. He worked six months at Rockhill Mennonite Community near Sellersville, Pa., then another six months at Goshen (Ind.) College as a member of the physical plant staff.

"I knew I didn't have the finances or the connections to apply for college at that time, but I never lost sight of my dream," he says.

Luis returned to his home city of San Pedro Sula and found employment as a personal trainer at a sports complex. He remembers this as a period of uncertainty. "People told me to stop dreaming, just keep working, but I was determined to persist until things started happening," he said.

The life story of Luis Padilla

People told me to stop dreaming, just keep working, but I was determined to persist until things started happening.—Luis Padilla

In 1997, he returned to the United States, still single at age 31—"In my Latin culture people were starting to wonder about me," he says with a smile. He did maintenance and restaurant work in New York City, sending a portion of his earnings back to his family in Honduras and putting another sum into a savings account.

He moved to eastern Pennsylvania in 2000 and worked at Ziegler's Apple Cider plant while continuing to save money for education. He visited Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Va., that summer and sought advice from the international adviser, who encouraged him to explore the option of a two-year program at Hesston (Kan.) College.

About this same time, Luis became a member of Plains Mennonite Church near Lansdale, Pa. One Sunday he told his story to the congregation, and the church decided to offer some financial assistance to attend a Mennonite college.

Plains member Henry Rosenberger notes that the church gives a $4,000 grant every year to any student from the congregation who attends a Mennonite college or seminary. "We're strongly committed to Christian education," Henry says. "It's helping people develop their gifts for kingdom purposes."

Between the church's grant aid, funds he had managed to save from working and an offer of a scholarship from Hesston, Luis enrolled at Hesston in January 2002, where he pursued a track in education.

"It was hard, but I did well with my studies," he says.

Something else happened just before Luis moved to Hesston. Through people at Plains Mennonite, he met the woman who would become his wife—Sharla Kolb. Sharla was a widow with a 5-year-old daughter, Emily. The couple "dated" long-distance while Luis was in his first semester at Hesston; he proposed to her the summer of 2002, and they were married in late December that year.

Sharla and Emily joined Luis at Hesston, where they both studied full-time.

"I went through a lot of changes in one year," Luis notes. "I was a full-time college student, got married and became a stepfather." A second daughter, Sara, was born a year later.

During spring break of 2003, Luis visited EMU, told his story of wanting to complete a four-year degree and was offered a half scholarship.

"Having a family brought lots of concerns with how we were going to manage continuing my education in Harrisonburg," Luis says. "EMU would mean more tuition money, and I was only working summers and a few hours a week while studying full-time."

Again, Plains Mennonite committed funds to help supplement the scholarship offered by EMU.

I don't have adequate words to express my gratitude to both schools and to the Plains congregation for their support.

—Luis Padilla

Luis switched from education to applied sociology as his discipline at EMU and received a bachelor's degree in spring 2006, bringing a dream of more than 20 years to fruition.

"I'm grateful to Hesston and EMU for the education I received and for the professors who were willing to help me," he says, his eyes filling with tears and emotion rising in his voice. "I don't have adequate words to express my gratitude to both schools and to the Plains congregation for their support.

"When I came here [to the United States] I had nothing," Luis says. "I was holding on to a dream that was part survival in this new setting, along

Continued on page 10

Jim Bishop

A dream to fruition: Luis with his wife Sharla and daughters Emily and Sara in their home, Broadway, Va.

Continued from page 9

with a determination to send money back to my family and save for college.

"Every move was risky, and making those decisions that involved the unknown were difficult. I found myself waiting on the Lord."

After graduation, Luis and his family decided to remain in the central Shenandoah Valley area for the immediate future, not wanting to make another major move. Luis secured a position he enjoys as an assistant human resources manager at Cargill Foods in Timberville, Va.

Luis plans to enroll in the master's in business administration (MBA) program at EMU, which offers flexibility in class scheduling for working adults to earn this graduate degree.

He and Sharla bought a house in Broadway, near his workplace—"Some people say, 'Are you crazy?' " he says with a smile—but that's another risk Luis decided to take. "Here in America, it's possible," he says. The family attends Ridgeway Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg.

Not all that Luis has gleaned during his educational journey has taken place in the classroom.

"I discovered the importance of taking relationships seriously—having friends all over the place really helped—in helping fulfill my dream," he points out. "The connections made at Hesston and EMU will last a lifetime."

"I learned to manage my time and money—it's made such a difference," he says. "I've learned to wait and not take anything for granted—nothing is free; everything has a price. Part of that price was leaving a lot behind in coming to the United States, including not having seen his parents in 10 years.

Luis desires opportunities to tell the story of his journey to others, noting that "if only one person receives encouragement from my experience to pursue their dream, that's more than worth it."

"God will continue to be with us," Luis says. "I want to share my blessings with others."

Jim Bishop is public information officer at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., a freelance writer and columnist, photographer and radio announcer.

Every move was risky, and making those decisions that involved the unknown were difficult. I found myself waiting on the Lord.—Luis Padilla

No strangers in Fred's life

A tribute in memory of Fred Schmidt

Fred holding granddaughter Nadine Cressman
Courtesy photo

by Margaret Loewen Reimer

It was no surprise that Tabor Mennonite Church was packed for the funeral of Fred Schmidt, who died on Feb. 12, 2006, at the age of 58. Fred had grown up in the Goessel, Kan., community and was baptized at Tabor Church at age 15. Others knew him from his alternative service days or from his years in social services in Ontario.

What was a surprise, perhaps, were the moving tributes from people who had only met Fred briefly but considered him a friend.

One man recounted how he had met Fred at the cancer treatment center where his wife and Fred were receiving chemotherapy. The man recalled that when Fred entered the room he always greeted every person there, building a warm community in that fearful place.

"There was never a stranger in Fred's life," he said.

Another man who knew no one in the church got up enough nerve to come to the funeral but left right afterward, only to turn around and come back to pay tribute to his friend. He characterized Fred as someone who never judged people but accepted them as they were.

These men from outside the church community confirmed what many already knew: that Fred embodied the best of his Mennonite heritage. After a year of studies at Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., Fred was drafted by the U.S. military in 1966 to serve in the Vietnam War. Declaring his conscientious objection to war, he was assigned an alternative service term as an X-ray orderly in Fort Wayne, Ind. During this time he also worked as a Boy Scout leader, mentor and peace advocate in Fort Wayne's inner city.

Another volunteer in Fort Wayne at the time was Jo-Ann Enns of Bethany Mennonite Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont. Fred and Jo-Ann were married in 1968.

Fred was a modest man who enjoyed hard work. From 1972 to 1981, he and Jo-Ann lived in Ontario, where they served as group-home houseparents, employed by Ausable Springs Ranch. They had up to six boys in their care, along with their own three children. Fred was director of the Niagara Region Group Home program and spent two years as director of residential life for Bethesda Home in Vineland. He remained a shareholder in the Meaford Nursing Home in Ontario until his death.

In 1982, Fred and family returned to Goessel and helped run the family farm. In 1990, a tornado destroyed Iris Lane Dairy, and Fred went into the electrical business. He enjoyed his new work because it fulfilled his talent for problem solving and allowed him to meet new people.

Fred pursued everything with enthusiasm and dedication. Over the years he served as board chair of Bethesda Home in Goessel and was a deacon, Sunday school teacher and youth group sponsor at Tabor Church. He also enjoyed flying his ultralight, skiing and canoeing in Algonquin Park in Ontario. He loved all kinds of music, from bluegrass to opera.

In March 2002, Fred was diagnosed with lung cancer. The next years included many rounds of chemotherapy and radiation, but Fred also undertook hundreds of miles of cycling and running, often to raise money for Mennonite Central Committee. After the cancer metastasized to his brain in October 2003, fighting his illness became his "full-time job," as he liked to say. His sense of humor seldom left him.

Fred considered every day of life a miracle and enjoyed traveling to Toronto often to see his two granddaughters, who were born after his diagnosis. He and Jo-Ann also managed to attend three Mennonite Church USA conferences during his last years: in Nashville, Atlanta and Charlotte.

Fred left to mourn Jo-Ann, his wife, and son Jeffrey of Newton, Kan.; daughter Rachel and husband James Cressman and children Nadine and Elliot of Toronto; and son Michael and wife Christina Reimer (my daughter) of Toronto. He also leaves his father, Rudy, stepmother Nola and two sisters and a brother, as well as parents-in-law John and LaVina Enns of Parkhill, Ont.

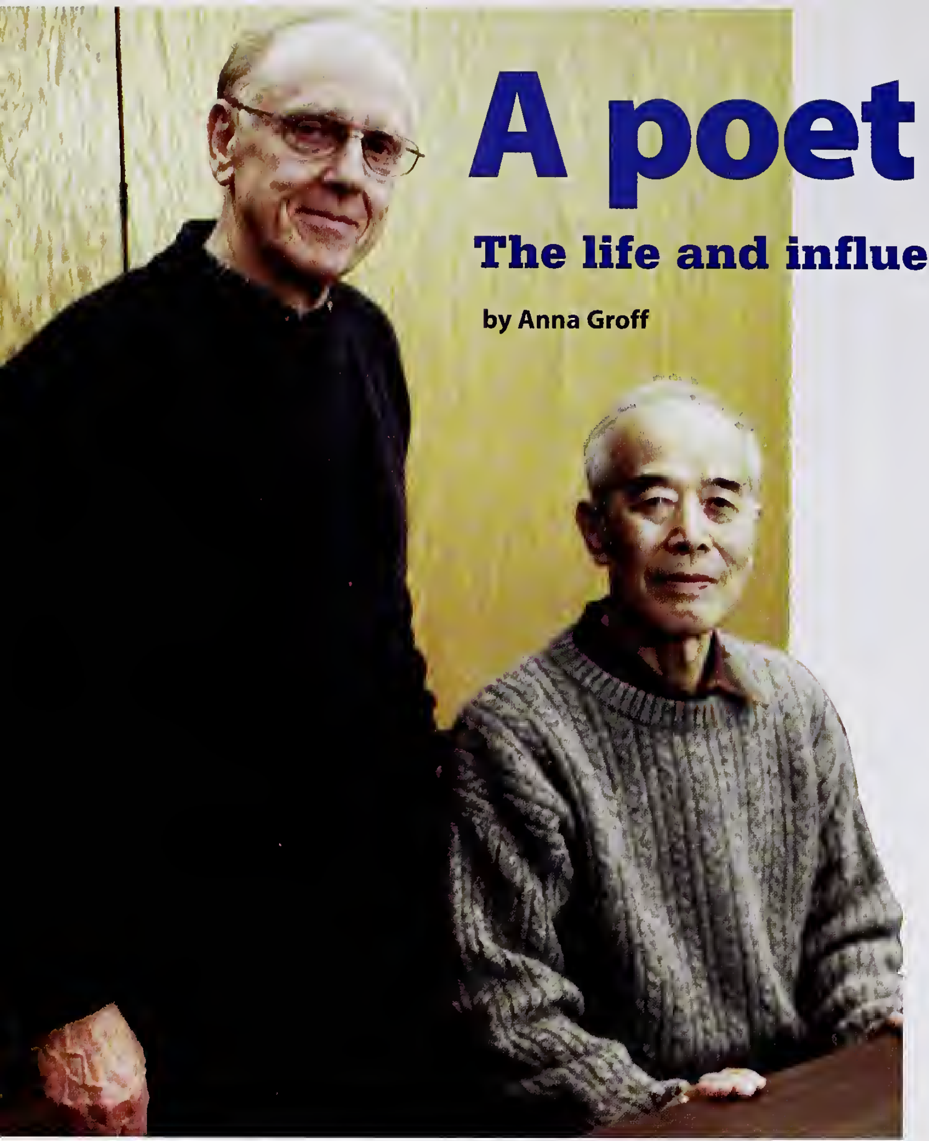
Margaret Loewen Reimer is a member of Rockway Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont.

These men from outside the church community confirmed what many already knew: that Fred embodied the best of his Mennonite heritage.

A poet of peace

The life and influence of Yorifumi Yaguchi

by Anna Groff



Goshen College photo

Lasting voice: Wilbur Birky (left) and Yorifumi Yaguchi

Japanese Mennonite poet Yorifumi Yaguchi describes the Bible as a "very new book" to him. "I use a lot of Bible passages for contemporary issues," he says. Yaguchi, a Buddhist turned Christian and Mennonite, embraces the peace stance in his poetry and names Christ's resurrection as the "victory of nonviolence."

Last July, Good Books published a new collection of Yaguchi's poetry, *The Poetry of Yorifumi Yaguchi* (see box). The 150 poems included in the book span Yaguchi's life, from his childhood during World War II to his career as poetry professor and editor, Mennonite pastor and a nationally recognized poet.

The Poetry of Yorifumi Yaguchi: A Japanese Voice in English, edited by Wilbur J. Birky (Good Books, 2006, $9.95), collects 150 of Yaguchi's poems and organizes them in six sections—"Silence," "Child of War," "Horizon," "Breath of God," "Words Made Flesh" and "War and Peace." His deceptively simple constructions contain layers of meaning, and his images may evoke both beauty and horror. As a child in World War II he witnessed the destruction of bombs dropped by the U.S. military. That witness may leave some readers discomfited. Yaguchi is a keen observer and leads us to new, disturbing visions. For example (see "In My Garden," page 13), refugees are "a legless katydid, / an armless cricket, a wingless grasshopper, / a snail with a broken shell." Editor Birky provides a helpful introduction.—*Gordon Houser*

"His images are startling and kind of relentless, because they step outside what we're used to," says Phyllis Pellman Good, senior book editor at Good Books. "His Christian faith is very real because it was not automatic for him … he has an ongoing relationship with his faith that is always full of surprises."

This collection's significance lies in Yaguchi's impressive skills as a poet and that he lives in a different world from us, Good says. The significance for Mennonites includes the many streams within him that surface in his poems, such as the war he experienced as a child, the influence of his Buddhist grandfather, his Christian faith and his commitment to peace, she adds.

Good says the collection feels like a "faithful cut of his work," and many of the poems are relatively current. She says she finds the poems written collaboratively with poets William Stafford and Robert Bly particularly interesting, as they open readers' eyes to new form and format.

The book's editor, retired Goshen (Ind.) College English professor Wilbur Birky, approached Good Books about publishing a follow-up collection to the 30 poems included in *Three Mennonite Poets* (Good Books, 1986). Birky first met Yaguchi during his time at Goshen Biblical Seminary. But Birky and Yaguchi became neighbors and friends during Birky's sabbatical year in Japan.

In October 2006, Yaguchi, widely known in Japan, read from his new book at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., as well as at Goshen College and at the Mennonite writing conference at Bluffton (Ohio) University. Yaguchi encouraged students at EMU to act as voices for pacifism, as many people in Japan do not hear the voice of pacifism or the voice of nonviolent Christians; many do not trust Christianity and see it as a violent religion.

Yaguchi, born in 1932, learned the Shinto way, which included emperor worship and a strong nationalism, from his father. During his childhood, Yaguchi believed Japan was a "divine country," and he thought the United States and Britain were "beasts." He wanted to be a soldier to fight against the United States, and many of his friends shared this dream.

However, from his grandfather he learned Buddhism and peaceful ways, and his mother had an interest in Christianity. Yaguchi attended a Christian college but not particularly because of its religious affiliation. There he studied T.S. Eliot but continued to view violence and war as a contradiction in the Christian faith and was only briefly introduced to Mennonites.

Birky says one often thinks of someone coming from a different religious tradition and encountering Mennonites later. "(Yaguchi), in a way, came to that backward," Birky says. "He was a pacifist first and then an Anabaptist, or Christian, second." Birky has written a paper on Yaguchi, "Staring Down the Muzzle from Yomoto to Baghdad: Memory and Urgency in the Poetry of Yorifumi Yaguchi."

One of Yaguchi's first encounters with Christianity involved discovering Christmas cards in a dumpster, Birky says. Yaguchi felt intrigued by the worship of a young child and couldn't reconcile that with the violence he saw against Japan from the United States.

Yaguchi continued to wrestle with issues of faith and violence until he met Ralph and Genevieve Buckwalter, missionaries in Japan. When Yaguchi paid a special visit to Ralph to challenge him about Christianity and war, Ralph introduced him to pacifism within Christianity. Birky says that with this knowledge, Yaguchi's resistance to Christianity dissolved and he became baptized on Easter Sunday 1958.

Later, Yaguchi studied at Goshen Biblical Seminary from 1962 to 1965 and earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree. There he wrote an account of his conversion, "The Bible Was Nonsense to Me." During seminary, he studied Bible and theology and wrote poetry. According to Birky, Yaguchi writes poetry to "get into the mystery of Scripture." In his poetry about nature, he often uses the Japanese tradition of haiku.

Birky says he admires Yaguchi's approach toward violence, both current and historical, in his writing. Birky remembers when Yaguchi raised an important question at the writing conference at Goshen College, held one month after 9/11. When Birky picked him up at the airport, they talked about recent events, and Yaguchi asked, "What are Mennonite writers writing?" This honest and challenging question spread through the conference.

Yaguchi is first a poet in the Japanese language, as less than half his poems are in English, and he continues to publish in Japanese. Some of his poems in English he originally wrote in English, but most he translated himself.

Birky selected almost half of Yaguchi's more than 300 poems in English for the book and organized them by theme and chronology. The themes are "Silence," "Child of War," "Horizon," "Breath of God, "Words Made Flesh" and "War and Peace." A quote from Yaguchi—either from his writing, a comment he made or other poetry—introduces each section.

Birky says he did not plan on using this interaction between theme and time initially, but it developed over the course of the process. With his background in education, Birky thought this organization served poetry readers but also hopes anyone can pick it up and browse through it.

Birky's favorite poem, and Yaguchi's most-published poem, "In My Garden," describes the war wounded developing a "kind of maimed orchestra," he says. "It's an antiwar poem in its most tender form," he says.

Gene Stoltzfus, a friend of Yaguchi's, visited him in Japan two summers ago. Stoltzfus, director of Christian Peacemaker Teams from 1988 to 2004, and Yaguchi met at seminary 40 years ago but stayed in touch through the years.

During his visit, Stoltzfus says, he witnessed Yaguchi's profound leadership and experienced the respect people have for Yaguchi all over Japan. "People seek his endorsement of activities that have to do with peace," he says.

According to Stoltzfus, Yaguchi is a leader because of the person he has been, the poetry he has written and the reflection he has brought to the heart of Japanese life. "It's a gift not only to Japan but to the whole world," he says. "His voice will last long beyond his lifetime."

Anna Groff is assistant editor of The Mennonite.

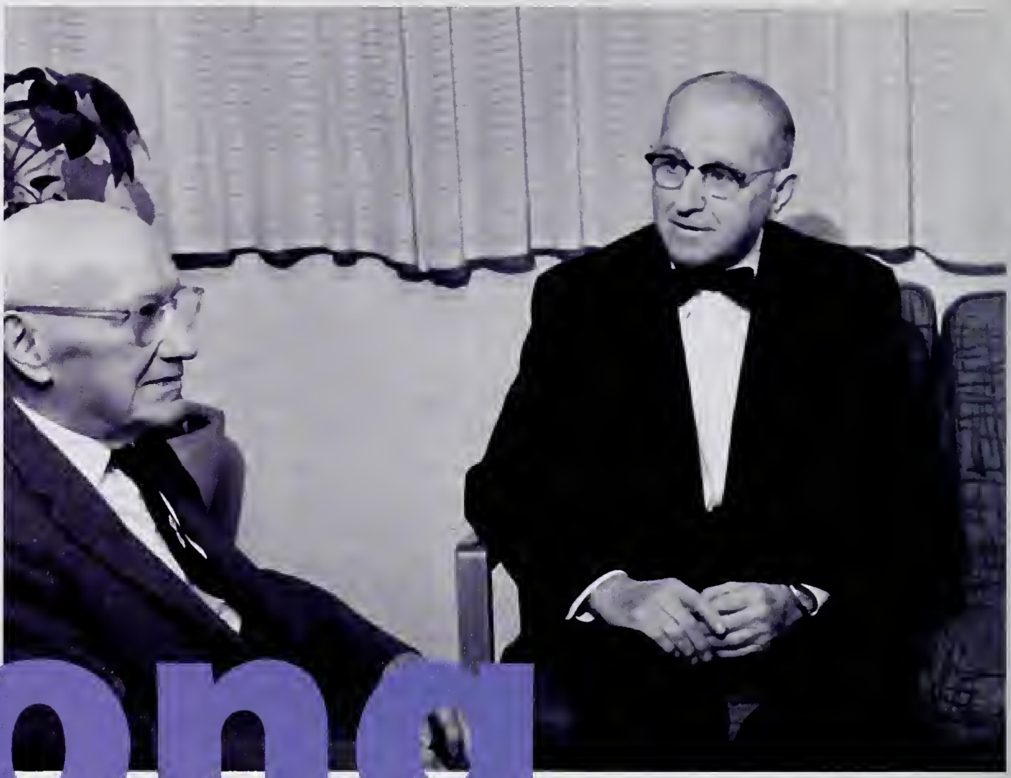
In my garden

by Yorifumi Yaguchi

Refugees come to my garden
where the grasses without insecticide
grow unweeded; a legless katydid,
an armless cricket, a wingless grasshopper,
a snail with its broken shell …

After a few nights
they are able to start
a kind of tuning up. Tonight
when the harvest moon floats
high at the center of the sky,

I leave my windows all open
and am attracted through the night
by the maimed orchestra
while my house keeps floating
on the waves of the surrounding grasses.



Walter E. Yoder (right) and John Umble, Goshen College faculty emeriti, ca. 1963

Mennonite Church USA Archives, Goshen, Ind.

the song leader

ONITE HYMNAL

A tribute to Professor Walter E. Yoder

by Dwight E. Weldy

We had just closed our songbooks when I was suddenly aware that I wanted the song to continue—wished for more stanzas. Professor Walter E. Yoder was the song leader during that September 1935 Goshen (Ind.) College chapel my freshman year. Through the years since that memorable occasion the same experience was often repeated.

Professor Yoder, as he was affectionately called by most students, was the usual chapel song leader. His congregational song leading was special and always inspirational; he could blanket a congregation with his spirit. Regardless of the size assembly he was leading, his distinctive song leadership was truly amazing—and even more amazing from our 21st-century vantage point.

With Walter leading, the congregation phrased music in ways that brought extra meaning to the texts.

Congregations that sang under Professor Yoder's leadership for any length of time developed a distinctly warm and mellow quality. Both observer and participant could sense a feeling that every individual was contributing fully but with no singer "sticking out." Seems I can hear it now. Both Goshen College students and the Goshen College Mennonite Church had such a sound that continued for years after Yoder's passing and was unmatched in any other congregation I have ever heard.

With Walter leading, the congregation phrased music in ways that brought extra meaning to the texts. Tempo was maintained without the weary-travelers-feeling slow-down. He did all this without singing ahead, rushing into the next stanza or talking to us. He allowed us to sing with him and not for him.

How did he do all this? I do not know and doubt anyone knows or knew. I am also certain that if he had been asked, the answer would have been, "I don't know."

This unassuming man grew up on a Haw Patch farm southeast of Goshen near Topeka, Ind.; then went to Goshen College, where he came under the influence of J.D. Brunk. After Walter and Matilda (Schertz) were married, they lived on a farm in Illinois, where he farmed, taught school, formed a famous men's chorus and led the Metamora Mennonite Church to a position of outstanding congregational singing. This continued until 1931, when President Sanford Yoder invited him to teach music at Goshen. There were no obvious mannerisms, no distinctive musical oddities about him that could be detected. To anyone meeting him, Yoder was an ordinary person. What showed was his infectious good humor and a most pleasant personality—friendly yet serious.

Some tell-tale characteristics that showed when he led songs may provide a window to some clues for his success:

1. A genuine, unassuming love for people and music. Witness the songs and hymns he wrote, the number of songbooks he edited, the many years he was chairman of the "Old" Mennonite General Conference Music Committee, the many times he was chosen to lead singing for the large gatherings of General Conference, the frequent invitations to lead singing for special occasions in congregations far and near, and the many friends in and out of music circles, all with no known enemies.

2. A pleasant disposition to cover any irritation he may have felt toward an individual, congregation or choral group he was directing. That disposition tied to his intense feelings for people and music helped oil the way for him to lead songs by inspiration. His choruses (not choirs in that day and age at Goshen) were also led (directed) to a large extent by inspiration rather than by disciplinary remarks. He let us enjoy singing, and that was his mark. He said to the chorus, "If you cannot hear those around you, you're singing too loud." With congregations, Professor Yoder seldom used spoken directives; he did not need words to explain what he wanted us to do and how to sing. We simply caught his feelings for songs.

3. Voice quality was certainly a big factor in his ability to lead congregational singing. His high baritone voice could always be heard leading, but it never stuck out. A particular quality in the sound of his voice allowed him to blend with others and even help those voices blend with each other. That quality defies description or comprehension. Today instruments exist that can identify overtones and measure the intensity of each. But if it were possible to so analyze Yoder's musical sounds, I doubt we would uncover any secrets for his successful song leadership. We will never know how much his voice quality affected our desire to sing with him. But desire to sing with him, we did. And we loved to do it.

We will never know how much his voice quality affected our desire to sing with him. But desire to sing with him, we did. And we loved to do it.

Professor Walter E. Yoder was truly a remarkable person and song leader, endowed with that rare combination of God-given talents, endearing him to all he met and allowing him to be a great song leader. We who worked with him or met him, however briefly, can consider ourselves fortunate and blessed. Thanks to God for allowing us to be touched by Professor Walter E. Yoder.

Dwight E. Weldy is a member of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA

amani

sala

Courtesy Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship

Sylvia Shirk Charles, MMF pastor, and Lowell Brown, Menno House manager.

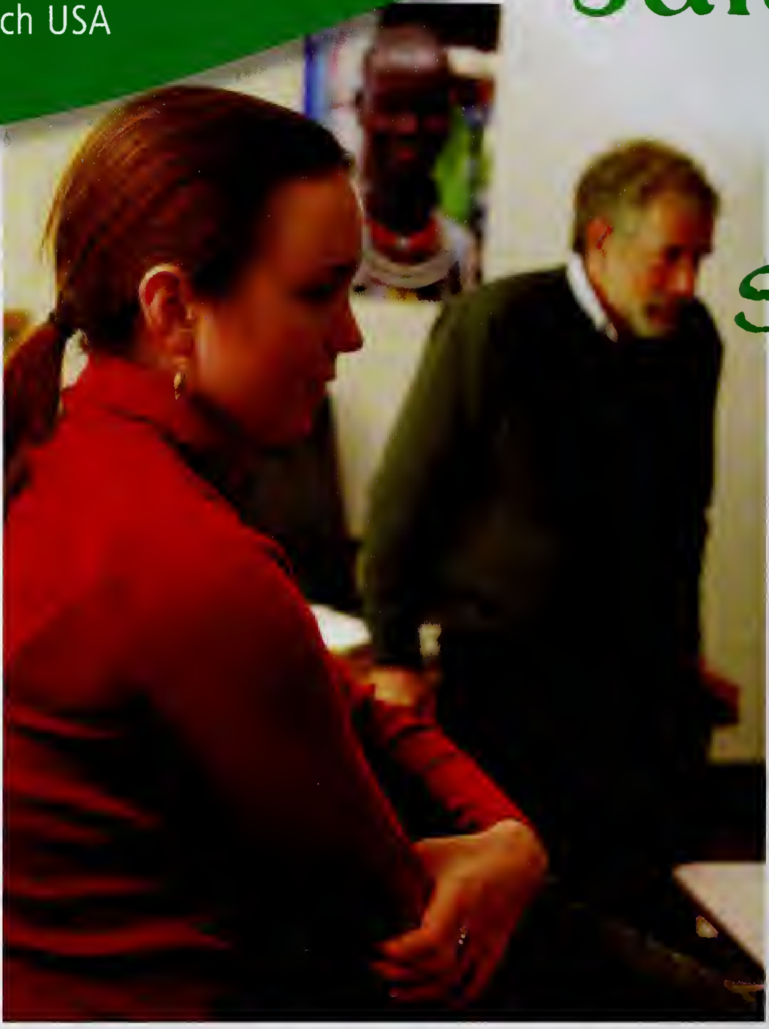


Photo by Lowell Brown

Mennnonite Central Committee volunteer Sara Yoder and director Doug Hostetter at the MCC United Nations Liaison Office.

Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship (MMF), in New York City, worships at 5 p.m. each Sunday in the Friends Meetinghouse at East 15th Street and Rutherford Place in lower Manhattan, within easy walking distance of the Union Square subway stop.

The congregation counts 80-90 participants and friends, who live around the greater New York area. MMF is a member of Atlantic Coast Conference of Mennonite Church USA. Average attendance at Sunday services is 35-45. Each month the service is structured around the songs and prayers from the Taizé community in France.

MMF's mission statement is, "Seeking the peace of New York City in our worship and witness." Members are involved in a variety of activities, including volunteering at the Friends Shelter for the homeless. MMF also sponsors a Mennonite Voluntary Service unit. Members of the unit have had placements with the Mennonite Central Committee

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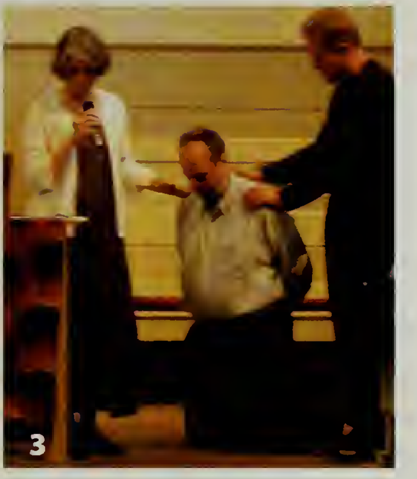

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1. The congregation gathers in front of the Meetinghouse following a September 2006 service.

2. Rick Brown is one of the MMF volunteers at the Friends Shelter for the homeless.

3. Clarke Bell is recommissioned as a deacon in October 2006 for his ministry in the homeless community in lower Manhattan.

4. MVS volunteers Amanda and Daniel Talstra and Adrian Koehn on the steps of Menno House. Photos by Lowell Brown

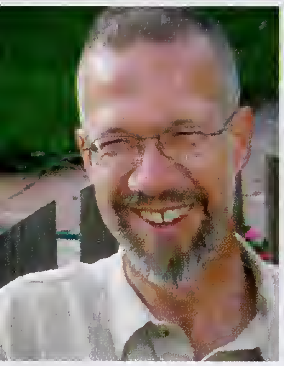
United Nations Liaison Office, the World Vision UN Office, the Lower East Side Harm Reduction Center, Bowery Mission Women's Shelter and the New York Horticultural Society. MMF also has a diaconate, whose members are active in local and churchwide ministries.

Founded in the early 1980s, MMF was first known as Peace Mennonite Fellowship. In 1989, the congregation called John Rempel as its first pastor. He served in a part-time capacity while he also developed the MCC UN Liaison Office. He was succeeded by Arlene Pipkin, who died on Easter Sunday 2002. Sylvia Shirk Charles became MMF's first full-time pastor in April 2006.

Menno House is the principal ministry of the congregation. Lowell Brown has served as its manager since 2003. Located five blocks from the Meetinghouse, this four-story brownstone provides housing for 10 young professionals, students and MVS volunteers and offers three guest rooms for visitors to New York City. Originally purchased by Eastern Mennonite Missions in 1958 to serve as the home of a voluntary service unit, MMF purchased the facility in 1997.

Web sites: www.manhattanmennonite.org; www.mennohouse.org.—*J Robert Charles and Dan Hood*

Do not answer violence with violence



Vernon K. Rempel is pastor of First Mennonite Church of Denver.

Like the "snow on snow" of deep winter in Christine Rosetti's war-time Christmas carol, last autumn we had "shooting on shooting" in schools in our nation. It is breath-taking, angering and so very sad. Can you imagine receiving a final email from your child saying "I love U guys"? Can you imagine Amish girls lying dead in the green fields near Lancaster, Pa.? It seems like more than the soul can endure.

What can one say from our great tradition of rejecting violence both in perpetration and in response? Worldly or common-sense wisdom often wants violence answered with violence. Our tradition, which we understand to be a powerful reading of the Bible, through the lens of Jesus' life, seeks another way. But we feel closely the enormity of the loss, grief and anger that dear people feel in these situations.

> God has given the church the possibility for something different from violence answering violence.

One response in our tradition has been to say that while the "world" may have its violence and counter-violence, the "regenerate" do not: Christ's way is love. We call people into Christ's community. Within community, the only sanction is regretful excommunication for failure to walk with Christ. The difficulty with this response is that increasingly we find it impossible to draw a bright line between the regenerate and the world. We find ourselves in the world with its issues and dilemmas, even as we seek to be an alternative community.

Another response that has been offered is that the only way of Christ in the world is "agape" love. Violence happens; we may only respond in love. The question immediately arises, however: What qualifies as loving response? Traditionally this meant no force at all, including no nonviolent or nonlethal response.

Here are four compelling considerations for our day:

1. The need to respond generously and with great and abiding empathy for those who have suffered violence. Talking about nonviolence is probably not helpful; demonstrating love is a far better path.

2. That we let our imaginations, even in time of greatest harm, be enlivened by the possibilities of God, not by what we automatically think or what common sense naturally presents. We seek to "be transformed by the renewing of [our] minds" (Romans 12:2). We may live with the divine hope that there are always more options than we have considered and actively seek a greater array of responses in conflict.

3. The affirmation that we may need to use force quickly and efficiently, but with restraint, to stop harm from happening. But force is different from killing; force as a way of Christ must always be open to the transformation of all involved, including the "vilest offender," as the hymn goes. We may take penultimate action to restrain perpetrators; their ultimate fate rests with God.

4. That we need to nurture lives of community building, overcoming the ways of fear and rage that crop up all too often. This means we do not participate in fear mongering for political or social advantage. It is so easy to score points with fear and to organize our lives around fear. Over and over again, the biblical stories show the Spirit inviting people to "fear not." Community building also means we do not participate in a culture of rage. It's so viscerally satisfying to go raging; it is the assumed response to terrorism, school shootings and other great tragedies. It is the coin of politics, talk radio and letters to the editor. Tough talk, torture, getting guns and so on are considered real and useful responses. But do they get us what we want? Does rage result in peace and security? Clearly it does not. Instead we need concrete actions of love that answer and interrupt the growth of violence.

Violence of any kind seems to "go down into the soil," making seeds for more violence. God did not create this world to be a vale of "violence on violence." The creation was named "good"; Jesus again affirmed earth and human society as a place of peace, healing and hope. God has given the church the possibility for something different and greater than violence answering violence. TM

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Stories from Congo**—Anna Groff

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

K-12 schools now evaluated by MC USA

Mennonite Education Agency's first-ever accreditations use Catholic protocols.

Mennonite Education Agency has granted accreditation to four schools following a new review process designed to strengthen Anabaptist-Mennonite influence in Mennonite elementary, middle and secondary schools.

The four schools are Christopher Dock Mennonite High School in Lansdale, Pa., Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School, Warwick River Christian School in Newport News, Va., and Western Mennonite School in Salem, Ore. Accreditation certificates were distributed at the Feb. 2-4 Education Leaders Gathering 2007 held in Pittsburgh. Six additional schools are now engaging in the process.

Schools receiving MEA accreditation must meet academic and Anabaptist-Mennonite value-based standards as outlined in *The Mennonite Edition of Validating the Vision: An Assessment Protocol for Mission Effectiveness, Institutional Accreditation and Strategic Planning.* The protocol was adapted from an instrument created by the National Catholic Education Association.

The protocol can be used as the self-study document for a full accreditation review, a tool for strategic planning or an internal assessment of mission effectiveness.

MEA implemented the protocol after Mennonite Schools Council (MSC) and its predecessors, Mennonite Elementary Education Council and Mennonite Secondary Education Council, asked the agency to provide oversight to and ownership of the process. There are 34 MSC preK-12 schools in the United States (including Puerto Rico) and Canada.

Mennonite Schools Council, currently led by J. Richard Thomas, Lancaster, Pa., recognized the need for Mennonite accreditation during conversations with Elaine Moyer, principal of Christopher Dock, as she led the school through its most recent secular accreditation process.

"I was hoping to find a way to streamline our work by finding a protocol that would strengthen our faith perspective," says Moyer.

"While looking at the Catholic model, I realized the protocol would serve our Anabaptist-Mennonite schools well if adaptations were made to reflect the values and vision of Mennonite Church USA."

Thomas says the council sees *Validating the Vision* as a tool to help Mennonite schools develop as missional centers of the church and to develop a greater sense of cohesion. As superintendent of Lancaster Mennonite, he saw the accreditation process as "a real gift."

"We updated our foundation documents," Thomas says, "connected with our community in new ways and developed a unified plan for educational growth on all of our campuses."

Mennonite
Education
Agency

Courtesy photo

Rosalind E. Andreas, chair of the Mennonite Education Agency board, presents an accreditation certificate at the Education Leaders Gathering 2007 to Lynn Showalter (center) and Greg Sommers of Warwick River Christian School. Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, Lancaster Mennonite School and Western Mennonite School also received certificates.

The protocol states that Anabaptist-Mennonite education finds its center in Jesus Christ and the call to follow Jesus daily. Schools receiving MEA accreditation commit to a pattern of discipleship nurtured in the ordinary routines of school life and shaped by restorative discipline practices that respect students as individuals within a faith community.

Anabaptist-Mennonite distinctives identified in the protocol also include a vision of teaching reflecting an Anabaptist understanding of life together in community. In this vision, teachers, on behalf of the church, offer instruction that inspires students to commitments running counter to cultural expectations.

Before receiving final approval, schools seeking MEA accreditation must submit official documents to a review committee, which includes Moyer, Yoder and Connie Stauffer of Lancaster, Pa., and a member of the MEA board of directors. Committee recommendations go to the MEA board of directors for action.

Schools that have received MEA accreditation say their programs have been affected by the process.

"Christopher Dock has experienced a double blessing," says Moyer. "In addition to providing a comprehensive review of our total school program, we have sharpened our school programs around Anabaptist-Mennonite beliefs about the person of Jesus."—*Gloria Y. Diener for Mennonite Church USA*

MC USA delegation sees Congo growth

Mennonite conference started 117 mission outposts in the past 30 years.

Anna Groff

Mennonite Church USA delegation members Ruth Keidel Clemens and Jim Schrag greet Congolese Mennonite church members after a worship service in Kalonda.

The seed planted by Mennonite missionaries in Congo grew. Now—under the leadership of Congolese Mennonites—it continues to grow. Pastor Damien Kakhenda, coordinator for missions of Congo Mennonite Church, says missionaries started eight mission stations, but since then Congolese Mennonites have established 117 mission outposts in the past 30 years.

"Now it's our history," Kakhenda says.

The resilience of the Mennonites in Congo touched members of the Mennonite Church USA delegation last month (see page 32).

"The Mennonite church in Congo is alive and well," says Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA and member of the delegation. "Though they face hardships, their worship is beautiful and engaging; their singing reflects marvelous harmonies, and their prayers are earnest."

Both groups must talk openly about their churches' strengths and weaknesses.

The delegation was sent by Mennonite Church USA to develop church-to-church relationships with two Mennonite groups: Congo Evangelical Mennonite Church and Congo Mennonite Church. CEM and CMCO grew out of the work of Congo Inland Mission, now called Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission.

Schrag says Mennonite Church USA will need to learn a new way of relating as partners: we need to discover our needs for which Congolese can offer counsel and their spiritual gifts. This delegation opened a new chapter for Mennonite Church USA's priority of nurturing global relationships, Schrag says.

The delegation of 13 split into three groups after several days in Kinshasa to visit the Mennonite communities in Tshikapa, Kitkwit and Mbuji Mayi—more rural areas.

Schrag, with three others, visited Tshikapa, headquarters of CMCO, Feb. 6-12. The main income for Tshikapa is diamond mining, and several church members are involved in the business through a South African company.

However, any kind of employment in Tshikapa, and in Congo, is rare. Only 2 percent of the men in Tshikapa are employed, says Komuesa Kalunga Adolphe, president of CMCO.

Since most men are on the road looking for a job, women stay home, care for the fields and participate in church life.

"It's circumstance, not a lack of interest [from men]," Komuesa says.

Lambertine Mumbanda, president of the CMCO women's groups, says 70 to 90 percent of church members are women. These women evangelize just like the men do, she says. They also have meetings, seminars, visit sick women and more.

While visiting churches, members of the delegation had exchanges with congregations after the worship services. Congolese church leaders explained the delegation's purpose: to explore possibilities for a church-to-church relationship. Congolese church members asked questions about missionaries who left Congo and how the church in the global North can financially support the church in the global South.

Schrag affirmed the growth and work of the church in Congo and explained that this is the beginning of a church-to-church relationship. He added that the two groups need each other, and visits will continue, although specifics are unknown.

For several debriefing sessions at the end of the two-week visit, church leaders from CMCO and CEM met with members of the delegation in Kinshasa. The group agreed that visits like this will continue, and Congolese should visit the United States.

The church-to-church group also agreed that systematic, joint planning for the relationship should continue; both groups must talk openly about their churches' strengths and weaknesses; top-level decisions must positively affect the churches, and dependency should not be a result on either side.—*Anna Groff*

Churches offer alternatives to Carnival

Bolivian Mennonites stay away from temptations of Fat Tuesday celebration.

Ryan Miller

Kely Sequeira and Debora Rodriguez celebrate the joy they've found in Jesus at a camp set up by the Bolivian Mennonite Church so youth and young adults will not participate in the country's Carnival on Fat Tuesday.

Although people from all over the world stream to Latin America to celebrate the festivities that culminate on Fat Tuesday (the day before the sacrifices of 40 days of Lent begin), many churches in Bolivia organize camps outside the cities to keep their young people far away from the temptations of Carnival.

During the camps this year, Bolivian national television spoke of two realities. A divided screen showed the disaster of a torrential downpour on the left and the extravaganza of Carnival on the right.

President Evo Morales declared the country under a state of emergency, with 60,000 people displaced by the flooding. Even the Carnival parade had to be postponed for a day.

Bolivian Mennonite Church (Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Boliviana) held its annual Carnival camp Feb. 16-20. At the same time, they were also providing food, clothing and shelter to people who had to evacuate their homes due to flooding.

Youth and church leaders at the Bolivian Mennonite Church camp described the Carnival as "colorful, with well-dressed queens wearing very little clothing" riding on elaborately decorated floats, free-flowing alcohol and sexual promiscuity. Stone throwing, paint and foam spraying and pick-pocketing are all hazards. Deaths during Carnival are not uncommon. Some are accidental from throwing stones and paint. Others are intentional, as rival comparsas (fraternities organized for Carnival) settle outstanding feuds.

"Carnival is not just playing," says Debora Rodriguez, member of Príncipe de la Paz Mennonite Church and teacher in a day-care center for single mothers. "I know that it involves worshiping Satan."

But the devil doesn't own all the fun. The church camp offers dynamic Bible study twice a day, Bible competitions, sports, talent shows, excellent meals, laughter far into the night and lots of time just to enjoy the company of other Christian friends. It is also a place to invite friends and give them a taste of what joy can be found in knowing Jesus.

While studying the theme "Living Out the Difference," campers explored distinguishing characteristics that enable followers of Jesus to persevere through hardship and temptation to obtain the prize Paul wrote about in 2 Timothy 2:7.

The Bolivian Mennonite Church uses a grant from Mennonite Mission Network to subsidize some of the camp expenses to make it affordable to Bolivian Mennonite Church youth.

"We cannot organize week-long camps the way churches do in North America and Europe," Margrit Kipfer Barrón says. "Our members can only afford a few days, even with the subsidies."

Kipfer Barrón, a Swiss Mennonite who has worked with Mennonite Mission Network and its predecessor agency in Bolivia since 1993, is also supported by the Mennonite Church in Switzerland. She has worked over the past years to help build vibrant ministries for the children and youth of the Bolivian Mennonite Church: camps, clubs, vacation Bible schools, Sunday schools and a church library.

Now youth leaders have been trained and have taken over these responsibilities, leaving Barrón free to do some preaching and worship leading in her home congregation, Sinaí Mennonite Church, where her husband, Freddy Barrón is a self-supporting pastor.

"After so many years of walking alongside people struggling so hard to break the ingrained habits that are ruining their lives, I thought it would be good to train children in the way of God's love while they are young," Kipfer Barrón said. "It is much better to build self-esteem than to try to cure alcoholism that grows from a poor self-image."—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network*

Carnival is not just playing. I know that it involves worshiping Satan.
—Debora Rodriguez

Group plans 'nonference' to save fuel

Mennonite Creation Care Council cancels its Creation Summit in 2008.

After more than a year of debate and careful planning, the Mennonite Creation Care Council has decided against holding a Creation Summit in 2008. The decision was made at the group's Feb 9-10 meeting at Goshen College's Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center (see box below).

The council decided that holding a separate event on the environment when earth care could be discussed at other planned meetings would unjustifiably contribute to global warming.

"This is the biggest nonevent we have planned," joked David Neufeld from Winnipeg, Manitoba.

This is the biggest nonevent we have planned. —David Neufeld

It was not easy for the group to give up the idea of its own separate conference, but several members of the group were challenged by Will Braun, a writer for *Canadian Mennonite*. In his Jan. 22 column, Braun announced that he will no longer fly, due to the energy consumption involved.

Dave Hockman-Wert of Corvalis, Ore., who spent part of the weekend's work session researching "green" conferences, estimated that the decision not to hold a Summit will save at least 50 tons of avoided carbon dioxide emissions: the equivalent of using 5,000 gallons of gasoline.

Hockman-Wert also suggested that Mennonite Creation Care Council's alternative approach be named a "nonference."

"Conferences where hundreds or thousands of people fly and drive many miles to the event may soon become unaffordable or unjustifiable, as fossil fuels become less available and the damage of using them more evident," Hockman-Wert said. "A 'nonference' offers a framework for imaginative alternatives to the traditional 'bricks and mortar' conference."

"We are not saying that a Creation Summit is forever a bad idea," said Greg Bowman of Bally, Pa. "However, at this stage, we would rather endorse local, regional or even national events already planned that may have a creation care component."

Members of the group agreed that avenues such as their Web site at www.mennocreation-care.org can generate dialogue, enthusiasm and action as well.

Mennonite Creation Care Council is also developing a strong relationship with Mennonite Mutual Aid as that organization expands its understanding of stewardship to include creation care.

Can a "nonference" actually happen? Jennifer Schrock of Goshen, Ind., thinks it can.

"We could call people to invest 20 hours in the environmental well-being of their local communities during a given month," she said. "They could send us stories about how they spent their time, or they could donate their unspent travel dollars to an earth-friendly cause."

Luke Gascho, who chairs Mennonite Creation Care Council, plans to represent the organization at San José 2007 convention in July and convene a gathering there.

Mennonite Creation Care Network is a network for Mennonite people and agencies actively engaged in the care and restoration of God's creation.

The network encourages the Mennonite church to claim its biblical and theological foundations regarding care of God's creation, discover the ties that link all created beings to each other and to God, confess the harm we have caused the natural world and act faithfully to restore the earth.

—Jennifer Halteman Schrock

Environmental center

Courtesy photo

Reith Village (right) is part of the Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center, a 1,150-acre nature center located in rural Noble County, Ind. It is owned and operated by Goshen (Ind.) College and was the site of a Feb. 9-10 meeting of the Mennonite Creation Care Council (see story above). Rieth Village was designed using the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and is the only LEED Platinum Registered project in Indiana. Since August 2006 it has generated as much electricity as it has used.—*Goshen College*

Tornado new focus of Katrina volunteers

Canadian Mennonite University students help clean up after Feb. 13 storm.

Mennonite Disaster Service crews in New Orleans woke up to strong storms and a tornado on Feb. 13, resulting in a quick change in plans. Ron Enns, MDS project director for New Orleans, assigned crews from the MDS New Orleans project site and got needed assistance from MDS project sites in Bayou La Batre and Mobile, Ala. The crews all traveled to the Westwego area of New Orleans, where the tornado touched ground.

By first accounts, 80 MDS volunteers spread out over the affected areas of Franklin, Carrollton and Westwego counties. The first task was debris removal and tarping.

"In the Franklin area, houses were partially collapsed, garage roofs blown off and FEMA trailers turned upside down in the middle of streets," said Enns.

News reports confirmed that a powerful tornado hit the New Orleans area, killing an elderly woman, injuring at least 15 other people and damaging dozens of business and homes in a region still trying to recover from Hurricane Katrina. The tornado hit Westwego at a time when another MDS team was in central Florida investigating the Christmas Day and Groundhog Day tornadoes for long-term recovery work.

Enns said the New Orleans area tornado affected a defined area causing extensive damage. MDS Gulf States coordinator Jerry Klassen, reported that "typically it takes at least a day or two before volunteers will be allowed in the area; MDS volunteers responded within hours of this disaster."

Crews were hard at work cleaning up debris, helping homeowners find and save precious personal items, tarping roofs and consoling those who needed time to tell their story.

"What I found to be the [hardest]," said MDS volunteer Jessica Riddell of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg, Man., "and yet the most rewarding part of working through the tornado was going through people's belongings and wondering what stories lie behind belongings.

"Each Christmas tree ornament, each vase, each lamp has a history and a story to tell. What we may see as rusted dirty stuff contains someone's heart and soul."

Volunteers also shared several buckets of homemade cookies with other relief personnel, homeowners and children.

Lois Klassen, another MDS volunteer from Saskatoon, Sask., said, "It was special to me to be able to touch the homeowner whose flattened house we cleaned up. When I gave her a hug it felt as though she was hanging on for dear life."

Andrew Richert, another CMU student, said, "It's not the different homes and places that have been destroyed that stick out, but the people whose lives are now broken and need our healing that I'll remember."

MDS has been responding to Hurricane Katrina and Rita since the fall of 2005, with over 6,800 volunteers from Canada and the United States contributing to the rebuilding efforts.

Currently there are 12 project locations in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. MDS is expecting to work in the Gulf for several more years. While MDS' main focus is on cleanup, repair and rebuilding homes, those activities also become a means of touching lives and helping people regain faith and wholeness.—*Scott Sundberg and Andi Dubé of Mennonite Disaster Service*

What I found to be the [hardest] and yet the most rewarding part . . . was going through people's belongings and wondering what stories lie behind belongings.—Jessica Riddell

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Future is good for European Mennonites

Gathering hears of ministry to 110,000 Russians with Mennonite backgrounds.

Hope for the future, keen public interest in Anabaptism, surprising church growth, new enthusiasm and challenges highlighted reports from seven countries when 20 Mennonite church leaders from conferences in Europe gathered in Karlsruhe, Germany, in December for their annual meeting.

While the leaders acknowledged that membership numbers suggest stagnation or even regression (the 2006 Mennonite World Conference directory showed a slight decline of 1.9 percent in Europe since 2003), they brought positive reports from Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany, Lithuania, Spain, France and England.

In Switzerland, where the first Anabaptists were persecuted for their faith, recent films, theater productions and reconciliation services have raised intense public interest and questions of today's Mennonites. Their resources are so stretched that they are looking for more people to take on the responsibility of responding. 2007 will mark the year of the Anabaptists, most prominently in the Emmental region beginning on March 24, 2007, in Langnau. They have invited people from other countries for the International Days July 26–29.

In 2006, Dutch Mennonites turned a new page by identifying Switzerland as the country of origin of the Anabaptist movement and a symposium in Amsterdam posed the question, "What is Anabaptist identity?" Some churches in the Netherlands are growing, but the conference is looking for ways to support churches that continue to decline. The Theological Seminary in Amsterdam is offering a new master's degree training program for work in the church and a course on weekends for volunteers.

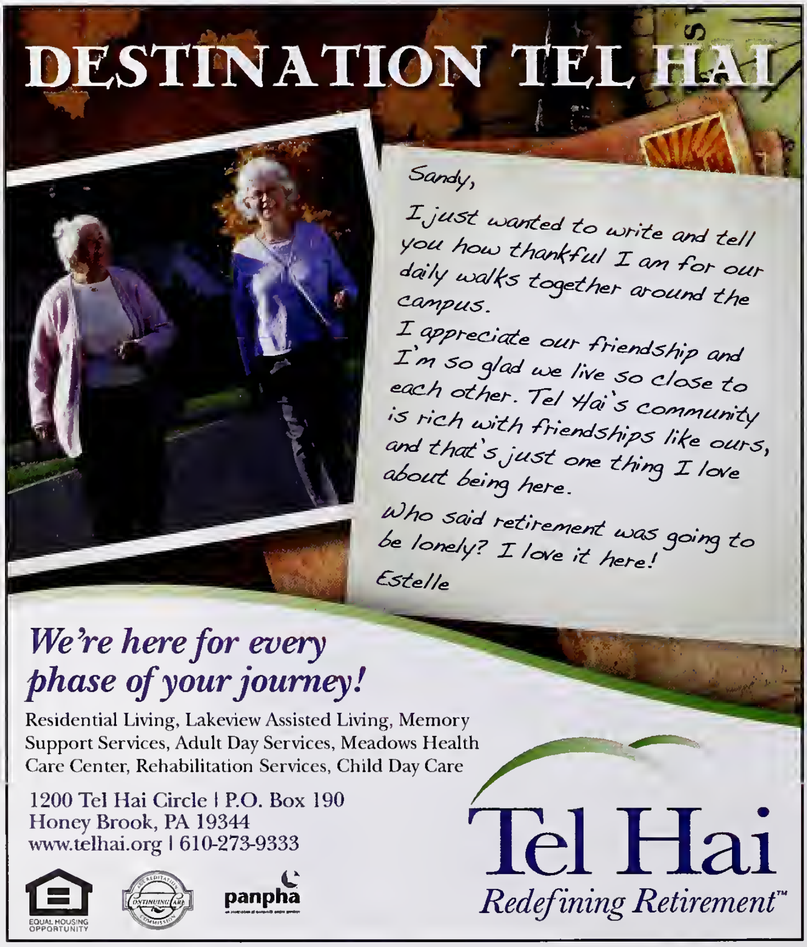
Building up the church has also been on the agenda of the Association of Mennonite Churches (AMG—Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mennonitischer Gemeinden) in Germany. Its 6,000 members in 54 churches in three regions undertake larger tasks collectively: publication of the journal *Die Bruecke* (The Bridge), the *Yearbook* and two youth projects.

Hermann Heidebrecht reported on the ministry to the Aussiedler. Since 1972, 110,000 people from the former Soviet Union with a Mennonite past, now called Umsiedler, have been registered in Germany. People with a Mennonite past constitute only a small percentage of the newly arriving Aussiedler. Members of Mennonite churches, which still exist in various areas of Russia, now are predominantly of Russian descent.

During the collapse of the Soviet Union, Mennonites emigrated from Kazakhstan via Lithuania to come to Germany. Today there are six churches in Lithuania with a total of 250 members because a Mennonite reading the Bible in a hospital captured the interest of his roommate. The man became a Christian and an elder in a Russian-German church.

Other Lithuanians who were approached got saved and formed Lithuanian churches. Evangelism is important to them, but many people work long hours and have little time for church work.

Until recently, the six churches in various regions in Spain, founded by U.S. Mennonite missionaries, had limited contact with each other. In 2006, all of them met together for the first time in Malaga. Also the Mennonite European Regional Conference (MERK), which took place in Spain for the first time in May 2006, was for Spaniards and other participants an enriching time. Spanish Mennonites have increasing contact with Protestant and Catholic churches and will make a contribution at a Protestant Congress in 2007 entitled "Reconciliation and Peace."— *From a report by Barbara Hege Galle and Markus Rediger, translated from German by Henry J. Regehr, Waterloo, Ont.*



DESTINATION TEL HAI

Sandy,

I just wanted to write and tell you how thankful I am for our daily walks together around the campus.

I appreciate our friendship and I'm so glad we live so close to each other. Tel Hai's community is rich with friendships like ours, and that's just one thing I love about being here.

Who said retirement was going to be lonely? I love it here!

Estelle

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CALENDAR

A ***benefit bike ride*** for **West Coast MCC affiliated Oregon Mennonite Residential Services** is planned for Aug. 12-17, 2007, in the beautiful Willamette Valley. Contact Brent Kauffman at kauffmanjb@netzero.com or Dave Miller at darami@bendbroadband.com for a brochure.

Sept 1-2, 2007, **Des Moines Mennonite Church, *50th Anniversary celebration.***

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Dinn, Emily Sue, Jan. 29, to Rob and Jaime Warne Dinn, Iowa City, Iowa.

Hinrichs, Lucas Albert, Feb. 17, to Mark and Maya Spichiger Hinrichs, Philadelphia,

Hoch, Chloe Marie, Feb. 7, to A.J. and Stephanie Landis Hoch, Pennsburg, Pa.

Horner, Ella Marie, Feb. 6, to Tyler and Katie Krehbiel Horner, Peoria, Ill.

Foltz, Caden Royce, Jan. 26, to Jimmy and Nicole Bauman Foltz, Harrisonburg, Va.

Kuntz, Miles Edward, Feb. 9, to Ian and Melissa Benedict Kuntz, Delta, Ohio.

Mast, Tyler Jay, Jan. 14, to Loren and Keri Mast, Linville, Va.

Melchior, Trent James, Feb. 2, to Jason and Patti Melchior, Souderton, Pa.

Plett Boehm, Sarah Magdalene, Feb. 3, to Tim Plett and Maria Boehm, Kitchener, Ont.

Reinford, Owen Trevor, Feb. 13, to Richard and Shana Swartley Reinford, Quakertown, Pa.

Sadler, Mabry Alizabeth, Feb. 9, to Nathan and Jocelyn Hartzler Sadler, Fairfax, Iowa.

Schlabach, Brayden Joel, Feb. 8, to Joel and Megan Beachy Schlabach, Hartville, Ohio.

Shank, Simon Levi, Nov. 14, 2006, to Perry and Rebecca Miller Shank, Lakewood, Colo.

Starner, Ava Rose, Dec. 3, 2006, to Josh and Heidi Miller Starner, Walnut Creek, Ohio.

Thomas-Wenger, Stella Bean, Feb. 5, to Sheldon Wenger and Marlisa Thomas, Millersville, Pa.

Ulrich, Preston Matthew, Feb. 5, to Matt and Amy Ulrich, Normal, Ill.

Warnick, Olivia Rose, Feb. 13, to Derek and Renee Steffy Warnick, Philadelphia,

Wyse, Carson Dale, Feb. 11, to Greg and Stacey Dominique Wyse, Toledo, Ohio.

Youssef, Macy Isabelle, Feb. 9, to Gideon and Karen Bond Youssef, Colmar, Pa.

MARRIAGES

Featherstun/Graber: Catharine Featherstun, Wayland, Iowa, and Troy Graber, Wayland, Jan. 19 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Kline/Yoder: Suzana Kline, Souderton, Pa., and Kyle Yoder, Perkasie, Pa., Dec. 30, 2006, at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie.

Mayer/Stockie: Shelley Mayer, St. Clements, Ont., and Rob Stockie, Stratford, Ont., Feb. 3 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs, Ont.

Milam/Schertz: Eleanor Milam, Atlanta, and Vernon Schertz, Atlanta, Dec. 9, 2006 at East Atlanta Christian Fellowship.

Newswanger/Schroeder: Lynda Newswanger, Newton, Kan., and Daniel Schroeder, Hillsboro, Kan., Dec. 16, 2006, at Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS
FOR THEY WILL BE CALLED
THE CHILDREN OF GOD.
– MATTHEW 5:9
Notes for the journey...
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"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

DEATHS

Albrecht, Margaret, 96, Greeley, Colo., died Feb. 5. Parents: Franz and Marie Wiebe Albrecht. Funeral: Feb. 7 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice, Neb.

Beechy, Reetha Fay Mast, 92, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 3, 2006. Spouse: Mark M. Beechy (deceased). Parents: Calvin and Etta Miller Mast. Children: M. Charlene Stoltzfus, Barbara Springer, John, Brenda Huneryager, Leonard; 10 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 9 at Martins Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio.

Bustos, Mary G., 82, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 22. Spouse: Margarito G. Bustos, Jr. (deceased). Child: Steve; five grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 27 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Flaming, H. Waldo, 91, Reedley, Calif., died Jan. 20. Spouse: Hilda Brandt Flaming (deceased). Parents: Henry and Agnes Flaming. Children: Gracie Rogalsky, Jerry, Barbara Flaming, Stan; nine grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 25 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Frey, Carol, 74, Wauseon, Ohio, died Feb. 8. Parents: Simon and Verna Beck Frey. Funeral: Feb. 12 at North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon.

Graber, Richard Daniel, 72, Andover, Mass., died Jan. 29. Spouse: Rachel Leatherman Graber (deceased). Parents: C.L. and Mina Roth Graber. Children: Jennifer Graber, Caelin Graber. Funeral: Feb. 11 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Hartzler, Agnes Evelyn Nafziger, 96, Eureka, Ill, died Jan. 20 of Alzheimer's disease. Spouse: Robert James Hartzler (deceased). Parents: John and Lydia Litwiller Nafziger. Children: Alice Kennell, Ila Stoltzfus, Stanley, Priscilla Hawkinson; 13 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 27 at Maple Lawn, Eureka.

Hartzler, Catherine Fisher, 90, Elkhart, Ind., died Feb. 4. Spouse: John L. Hartzler (deceased). Parents: Adam and Mary Leinbach Fisher. Children: Juanita Kaye Hartzler, Laveta M. Randall, Vivian Hunt, Ernest E., Floyd G., Lewis E., Kenneth L., Wayne L.; 10 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 9 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Hearing, H. Paul, 80, Lansdale, Pa., died Feb. 9. Parents: Russell and Clara Kerr Hearing. Children: Beverly Cirigliano, David, Wanda Hearing, Kevin; two grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 15 at Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale.

Hofstetter, Clair D., 93, Kidron, Ohio, died Jan. 28. Spouse: Ruth N. Horner Hofstetter. Parents: David J. and Lavina Gerber Hofstetter. Children: Wesley, Rebecca Myers, Rodney, Everest; 11 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 1 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Hoover, Isabel May, 62, Pleasant Gap, Pa., died Feb. 1 of cancer. Parents: Clarence and Josephine Welty Hoover. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Pleasant Hill Brethren in Christ Church, Pleasant Hill, Ohio.

Klassen, Walter J., 84, Hopedale, Ill., died Feb. 21. Spouse: Dorothy Litwiller Klassen. Parents: Jacob and Katherine Klassen. Children: Stanley, Steven, Sherrill, Ray, Wanda; 14 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 24 at Hopedale Mennonite Church.

Kos, Faye C. Damhoff, 60, Wellman, Iowa, died Feb. 17 of injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Spouse: Gary Kos. Parents: Gilbert and Frances Buikema Damhoff. Children: Shane, Melissa Kos, Cami Kos, Caitlyn Kos. Funeral: Feb. 21 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

Leichty, Glen B., 76, Wayland, Iowa, died Dec. 21, 2006. Spouse: Luora Mae Roth Leichty. Parents: William and Ada Roth Leichty. Children: Deon, Steve, Garry, Vicky Caraveo; 13 grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 24 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Neuenschwander, Deb Hershberger, 52, Kidron, Ohio, died Feb. 1 of cancer. Spouse: Conrad Neuenschwander. Parents: Roman and Marie Stutzman Hershberger. Children: DeAnn Mason, Conrad, Jr., Rodney; five grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 4 at Sonnenburg Mennonite Church, Kidron.

Penner, Marie E. Poole, 89, Beatrice, Neb., died Feb. 2. Spouse: Waldo Penner (deceased). Parents: W.S. and Della Gray Poole. Funeral: Feb. 6 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Rychener, Helen M. Frey, 85, Pettisville, Ohio, died Feb.16. Spouse: Earl Rychener (deceased). Parents: Edward and Fannie Rupp Frey. Children: Roselyn Devlin, Marnetta White, Dallas, Norene Salana, Delvin, Kent, Brent; 17 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 23 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Schultz, Elsie Marie Schrock, 89, Canby, Ore., died Jan. 28. Spouse: Julius Schultz (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Elizabeth Yutzy Schrock. Children: June Walch, Donna Springer, Carol Shank, Esther Schrock, Irene Bitikofer, Reuben; 13 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, Ore.

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Souder, Grace B. Detwiler, 88, Sellersville, Pa., died Feb. 13 of a heart attack. Spouse: Paul F. Souder. Parents: Elmer and Addie Baum Detwiler. Children: P. Don, Grace Marie Gerber, Feryl K.; eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17 at Rockhill Mennonite Community, Sellersville.

Swartzendruber, Lloyd Ralph, 91, Kalona, Iowa, died Feb. 1 of cancer. Spouse: Alda Burkey Swartzendruber. Parents: Isaac and Barbara Swartzendruber Swartzendruber. Children: Rose Anna Roberson, Arthur; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Toews, George W., 65, Canton, Kan., died Feb. 9 of cancer. Spouse: Diane Hett Toews. Parents: John H. and Martha Krehbiel Toews. Children: Flint, Mardi Heintzman; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 12 at West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan.

Toews, John G., 69, Hesston, Kan., died Feb. 7 of a heart attack. Spouse: Dorothy Bickel Toews. Parents: John H. and Martha Krehbiel Toews. Children: John D., Bill, Duane; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 12 at West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan.

Wright, Clifford J., 59, Lancaster, Pa., died Feb. 1 following a brief illness. Spouse: Donna K. Wright. Parents: Edward L., Sr., and Clair M. Wright. Children: Brian Patterson, Cindy Patterson, Clifford J., Jr., Tina M. Wright, Ashley T. Wright; four grandchildren, two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 10 at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Yoder, Delmar D., 85, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 30 of cancer. Spouse: Lurmae Slead Yoder. Parents: Chris and Barbara Troyer Yoder. Children: Paula Meyers, Dennis; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 3 at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Correction: The Feb. 6 obituary for Elsie M. Hofstetter spelled her name incorrectly.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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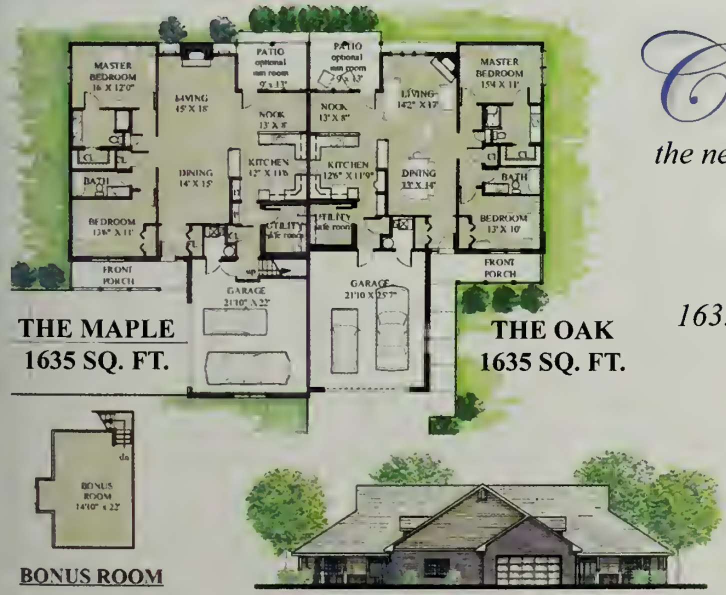

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Spring Family Weekend at **Spruce Lake Retreat** May 11-13, 2007, features a trout fishing derby (child/adult teams), nature photography workshop and other spring activities for outdoor family fun! Speaker Lenny Luchetti and concert musician Steven J. Wales will challenge and inspire families toward spiritual growth. Family-Friendly Package, $296 for four. Call 800-822-7505. Spruce Lake is located in the Pocono Mountains (Pa.), www.sprucelake.org.

Executive director for **Choice Books** (CB) of Great Lakes-Rosedale, one of eight CB distributors, sharing the "good news" of Jesus Christ in the general marketplace through inspirational Christian books. Responsibilities: manage distribution and servicing of CB displays in Great Lakes region and Pacific Northwest; provide visionary and administrative leadership for approximately 20 staff, relate to the larger Choice Books ministry. Qualifications: commitment to mission/service; business knowledge, skills and experience; financial/budget management, computer and organizational skills; member of Anabaptist church. Education: BS or BA degree preferred. Send resumé to Mim Musser, 9920 Rosedale Milford Center Road, Irwin, OH 43029; 740-857-1605 fax; mim@rmmoffice.org or call 740-857-1366 for more information.

Hinkletown Mennonite School is seeking a ***development director*** to begin July 1, 2007. We are seeking an experienced professional to join us as we grow. Please visit our school site at www.hmsk8.org. Applicants may send a resumé to Tana Pelkey-Landes, Principal, by email tpelkey-landes@hms.pvt.k12.pa.us.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking qualified applicants for the position of ***residence director*** (two vacancies). Responsibility for supervision of community advisors, social and educational programming to meet student's needs, disciplinary and personal adjustment counseling and referral, crisis intervention and general administration of the residence hall. Work with other residence life staff and director of housing and residence life in team approach to residence hall management. The position requires an approximate average of 20 hours per week. Live-in position. Bachelor's degree with previous experience in residence life administration and/or counseling with a college-age population. Master's degree in progress preferred. Graduate students welcome to apply. Previous resident assistant experience desirable. For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu/human-resources. Send letter of application, resumé and three references to: Human Resources Office, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, fax 540-432-4600.

Leamington United Mennonite Church invites applications for a ***full-time lead pastor***. Our church is located in Essex County in southwestern Ontario, about a half hour from the University of Windsor and three hours from both Conrad Grebel College and AMBS. Essex County contains five Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) churches and about 20 other Mennonite churches. Our church has an average Sunday morning attendance of 350 people. The successful candidate will lead a pastoral team, which includes an associate pastor, a youth pastor and a part-time music minister. The planned starting date is July 2007, subject to negotiations. Interested individuals are asked to contact Muriel Bechtel, MCEC office, at 4489-4497 King Street East, Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2, 519-650-3806.

Lake Center Christian School (K-12), 620 students in Hartville, Ohio (Akron/Canton area), is accepting applications for the following position: ***full-time director of development***. This person will lead the development department in all areas of public relations, fund-raising and donor development/relations. LCCS is owned/operated by Cornerstone, Hartville and Maple Grove Mennonite churches. For further information, please contact Matt McMullen, Superintendent, phone 330-877-2049, fax 330-877-2040, email lccsmmcmullen@yahoo.com.

Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., is seeking candidates for a current open position of ***full-time youth pastor***. Responsibilities include program coordination and ministry for high school and middle school youth groups (25-30 members each) and other general pastoral tasks. For more information, contact Nancy Kauffman at 574-534-4006 or nancy@im.mennonite.net.

Glencroft is a faith-based not-for-profit retirement community. We are looking for a ***vice president of environmental services*** to maintain our 40-acre campus in Glendale, Ariz. This person will be responsible for all maintenance of the buildings and mechanical systems, grounds, telephone systems and the housekeeping functions for the residential areas of the campus. This position must ensure that Glencroft facilities are properly maintained in a safe and efficient manner. To function effectively in this position, the ideal candidate should possess a bachelor's degree in business or a related field, with three years of recent facilities management experience. This person must have an extensive knowledge of fundamentals of construction and the trade industries; applicable building, plumbing, electrical and mechanical codes. This person must possess excellent human relations and communication skills and be able to manage multiple priorities. Project management skills are essential. This person must be computer literate. Qualified candidates are encouraged to send a resumé and cover letter to heidi@glencroft.com.

Mennonite Manor, a 250-resident retirement community in South Hutchinson, Kan., seeks a ***CEO*** with strong financial acumen, deep operational experience and a commitment to staff development and older adults. Minimum candidate requirements are: bachelor's degree, five years senior management experience in the health/human service or education sectors and board experience. Send inquiries to: Caryn Howell, MHS Alliance, 234 S. Main St., Suite I, Goshen, IN 46526, fax 574-534-3254 or email carynhowell@msn.com.

Lititz Area Mennonite School, a K-8 Christian school in Lititz, Pa., serving 305 students, is looking for a ***head administrator*** for the 2007-08 school year. The position requires great organizational and managerial skill as well as academic knowledge and a vision for educational excellence. Candidate must have a passion for Christian education and excellent communication and relational skills. Leadership in Christian school administration is a plus. Bachelor's degree in school administration or education required, preferably a master's degree. Send inquiry or resumé to: Matt Burkholder, Search Committee Coordinator, Lititz Area Mennonite School, 1050 East Newport Road, Lititz, PA 17543; 717-626-9551, email lamsoff@dejazzd.com.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership is seeking a ***half-time Web editor*** to join its communications team in Newton, Kan. The ideal candidate will be a quick learner with strong writing and editing skills as well as an ability to work well within a creative team atmosphere. Some Web design background and public relations or marketing experience are a plus. Spanish-speaking skills are highly desired but not required. Those interested may submit a letter of intent, resumé and writing samples to Executive Leadership Human Resources at P.O. Box 347, Newton KS 67114, HR@MennoniteUSA.org or call 316-283-5155, ext. 249. Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership is an equal opportunity employer and encourages women and racial/ethnic people to apply.

Sunnyside Village, a 400-resident Mennonite affiliated retirement community in Sarasota, Fla., seeks a ***CEO*** with strong financial acumen, deep operational experience, and a commitment to staff development and older adults. Minimum candidate requirements are: bachelor's degree, five years senior management experience in the health/human service or education sectors and board experience. Send inquiries to: Caryn Howell, MHS Alliance, 234 S. Main St., Suite I, Goshen, IN 46526, fax: 574-534-3254 or email: carynhowell@msn.com.

Sunshine Inc., a Mennonite-affiliated provider of services to people with disabilities, seeks a new ***executive director***. Located in Maumee, Ohio, the organization serves over 1,000 people annually with a range of services, including residential care, group homes, supportive living, respite care and vocational services. Minimum candidate requirements are: bachelor's degree, five years senior management experience in the health/human service or education sectors and board experience. Send inquiries to: Kirk Stiffney, MHS Alliance, 234 S. Main St., Suite I, Goshen, IN 46526, fax: 574-534-3254 or email: kirkstiffney@msn.com.

Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, B.C., is seeking a ***full-time associate pastor of youth and young adults***. This person will serve in a leadership team under the direction of the lead pastor. Although the primary responsibility will be to work with the youth and the youth leaders, an interest in providing leadership for the young adult small group would be considered a definite asset. The successful candidate will have a theological education, will agree with our church's vision statement and statement of faith and will have a passion for youth ministry. Starting date: July 2007; application deadline: March 31, 2007. Interested people are invited to visit our Web site for a complete job description and to submit a cover letter and resumé to: Youth Pastor Search Committee, Peace Mennonite Church, 11571 Daniels Road, Richmond, BC V6X 1M7; Phone: 604-278-0111; email office@peacemennonite.ca; Web site: www.peacemennonite.ca.

Native Mennonite Ministries is reshaping its staffing. We are looking for one or more ***part-time*** people. Skills needed: written communication/office organization and relational/pastoral (willing to travel). Contact Willis Busenitz: willisnadine@juno.com; or Olivette McGhee: 251-368-5938.

Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich., is seeking someone for ***maintenance assistant*** (start date as early as April 2007): Full-time salaried position including housing, insurance and meals. (Potential for short-term voluntary service as well.) Experience with basic maintenance, minor repairs and operating machinery is needed. Contact Justin Weaver (justin@friedenswald.org or 269-476-9744) if interested.

Hesston College seeks applicants for ***faculty positions in choral music and instrumental music***: woodwinds/brass. Master's degree and teaching experience required, doctorate preferred. Qualifications: innovative spirit; love for students; commitment to Mennonite higher education and the Mennonite church. Responsibilities may include classroom teaching in music theory, conducting and integrated arts. Candidates may apply for one or both positions. Positions available Aug. 1. Review of applications begins March 10 and continues until positions are filled. To apply, send curriculum vitae and personal faith statement to Bonnie Sowers, Interim Academic Dean, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062. Position descriptions available at www.hesston.edu/employment.

Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp seeks a ***capital project/volunteer coordinator*** to facilitate Vision 2012 Campaign projects. General construction and leadership skills are desired. Housing and stipend are offered as part of this one-year term (minimum). Please contact Corbin Graber, Executive Director, at 719-687-9506 or corbin@rmmc.org.

Goshen College invites applications for a full-time position: ***director of master's program*** in environmental education/professor of environmental education at Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center to begin in July 2007. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Bethany Christian Schools (gr. 6-12; enrollment 285) invites applications for 2007-08 for the position of ***athletic director***—70 percent load for the athletic director role and 30 percent for teaching in an area based on qualifications. Applicants should hold, or be qualified to obtain, Indiana licensure. To apply, submit a resumé and letter of application to Allan Dueck, Principal, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-5499. Phone: 574-534-2567; email: akdueck@bethanycs.net.

English conversation teachers needed. **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

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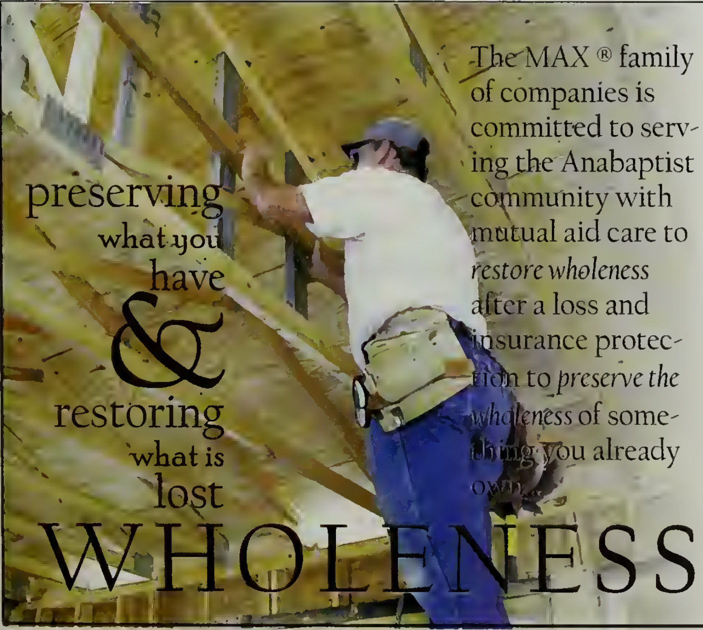

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Retrieve, rehab, recover

Gerald Shenk teaches at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

In conversation over a meal with several acquaintances, one woman—single in midlife—observed: "I know why I made the choices I did to prepare and focus on a career, and I understand how that was different from choosing a path toward marriage and family, but I never realized it could be so lonely." Her tone was not remorseful so much as profoundly bewildered over the cumulative impact of reasonable decisions shaped in response (as I understood her) to God's call on her life.

We are slow to recognize in our congregations the new reality that half the adults in this society are not married. Whether by choice or in bereavement or by default, the people whose world is not shaped primarily in conjunction with a partner in marriage are now moving into a social majority that will change the reality of congregational life.

"If you have a new world, you need a new church," Brian McLaren observes. He adds, "You have a new world." Part of this new world reality is shaped prominently by its fabulous new technologies, and many of them offer more connectivity than ever. Time spent in the blogosphere or chat rooms, however, is no substitute for face-to-face interaction with fellow pilgrims on a shared spiritual journey. For a time, people may find intriguing diversions by slipping through the portals of the Internet. Will the new church be there, when refugees (some simply lonely, others wounded and possibly addicted) stumble back from cyberspace or individual pursuits, longing for real human contact?

True community is ever more difficult to locate and achieve.

In the wake of sudden job loss or career jolt, in the turbulence of bonds broken and discarded by an unfaithful spouse, in the social abandonment of the elderly and the young alike, true community is ever more difficult to locate and achieve.

"New church" ideas are stirring much imagination these days. It's not as if everything we know of life in the body of Christ must be scrapped and rediscovered from scratch. But it seems many people are increasingly suspicious, resisting easy formulas and stale solutions. They are especially allergic to the old arrogance that managed to communicate both hollow perfection and thin self-righteousness.

Last month I visited a nearby start-up community church that appears to be vaguely Baptist in its tradition. In its first two years it has grown from 80 to 240 participants, including 90 children in the burgeoning youth program. Two points were emphasized at least five times in the first 10 minutes of the service: "We don't judge you for how you're dressed when you come for worship, and we don't ask how many relationships you've had." What does this tell us about the barriers newcomers anticipate when encountering church standards?

In another fledgling effort, a team of us have begun to live into the practice of hospitality—at the Lord's Table, "where grace is offered and makes its claim," and at our family tables. We regularly disperse to host homes with all who can join us after the morning worship for a hearty noon meal and extended conversation in Sabbath time.

As a single mother joined us one Sunday, she received a distressed call from her son, who discovered an alarm sounding for carbon monoxide in their home (some distance away). People around the table swarmed toward the problem, testing ideas and resources to mobilize in determining the level of actual threat. Phone calls worked the lines of advice, specialists were contacted and the puzzle was solved with some valuable learning in community. Parenting alone and far from extended family, the challenges for coping are immense. The young son, a new driver, discovered the importance of keeping the garage door open while warming an old car's engine on a cold morning—literally a life-saving exchange. Thank God for the alarm and for the surging strength in body life of an emerging faith community, affirmed when we allow ourselves to reach this level of engagement with ordinary reality. Worship in the express lane can't match it.

Patterns of living alone in our culture are more and more widespread. The simple fact emerges: churches cannot assume that the priority or majority of family units in the congregation will be married-with-kids. The strengths of "new church" (and "old church" as well) will lie in our ability to reconnect people into the social fabric of interwoven homes and links for fellowship beyond the single hour reserved for Sunday worship. And who knows? Perhaps the church of Jesus Christ, whether new or old, will take a turn onto a slower lane and renew our hospitality by extending the table right into real life and sabbath rest. TM

Sailing Acts: Following an Ancient Voyage by Linford Stutzman (Good Books, 2006, $14.95) takes readers on board a 33-foot sailboat to follow the routes of the Apostle Paul's tumultuous sailing journeys in the first century A.D.

Jewish Holidays: A Brief Introduction for Christians by Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky and Rabbi Daniel Judson (Jewish Lights, 2006, $16.99) is a straightforward guide to the major Jewish holidays that explores each holiday's historical development, basic information about the holiday's meaning and the way it is observed today.

Panentheism—The Other God of the Philosophers: From Plato to the Present by John W. Cooper (BakerAcademic, 2006, $34.99) traces the origin and development of panentheism from Plotinus to Alfred North Whitehead and beyond. The concluding chapter offers a judicious analysis of panentheism and an explanation of Cooper's commitment to a modified classical theism.

The Divine Embrace: Recovering the Passionate Spiritual Life by Robert E. Webber (BakerBooks, 2006, $16.99) evaluates the popular view of spirituality that there are many paths to God and sees this misunderstanding as separate from God's story, self-focused and shaped by our surrounding culture. Webber calls us to an alternative Christian spirituality that reveals God's "divine embrace" and our passionate response.

Rethinking Christ and Culture: A Post-Christendom Perspective by Craig A. Carter (Brazos Press, 2006, $19.99) follows in the footsteps of H. Richard Niebuhr, using typology to explore the crucial question of how Christians should relate to the world, but offers an alternative typology that is arguably more deployable in our post-Christian society.

Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Churches of New York City by Richard K. MacMaster (Pandora Press, 2006, $35) is an introduction to Mennonite urban mission in the 20th century that engages the reader with issues of ethnicity, gospel, local leadership, social engagement, migration and spiritual renewal.

Finding Hope: Cultivating God's Gift of a Hopeful Spirit by Marcia Ford (SkyLight Paths, 2006, $16.99) encourages us to draw strength from the Divine to overcome challenges, fears and distress in our everyday lives. It provides practical steps, prayers and meditations in each chapter, along with examples drawn from real-life struggles and quotes from Hebrew and Christian Scripture.

Proclaiming the Scandal of the Cross: Contemporary Images of the Atonement, edited by Mark D. Baker (BakerAcademic, 2006, $16.99), brings together presentations of the atonement given in a variety of contexts. The contributors reveal that Christians should embrace a whole constellation of perspectives on the atonement, all mutually reinforcing, because the language of the atonement must at once be metaphorical, pastoral and salvific.

Simply in Season Children's Cookbook by Mark Beach and Julie Kauffman (Herald Press, 2006, $21.99) will help children ages 6 to 12 make the connection between what they eat, where it comes from and when it is in season. The colorful cookbook makes it easy and fun for children to think and cook in season and to center food around the table and give thanks for it. Chapters on each season feature recipes for a complete meal adapted for children from *Simply in Season*.

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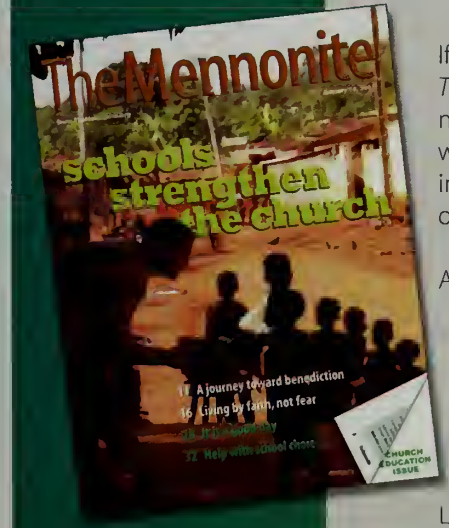
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Anna Groff

Church-to-church, person-to-person

With the return of the Mennonite Church USA delegation to the Democratic Republic of Congo in February, church leaders and members from both groups now ask, What happens next?

After this delegation, the next steps in the church-to-church relationship still remain unknown. However, one element is clear: This relationship must continue to function person-to-person, just as the delegation did.

The group of 13 from Mennonite Church USA, with various church positions and ages, connected directly with the Congolese Mennonites by eating and worshiping together, and visiting homes. Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, said this delegation was more than a "leader-to-leader delegation"; instead it connected "people-to-people."

The delegation, facilitated by Mennonite World Conference (MWC), traveled to Congo for two weeks to experience the daily life of Mennonites in Congo. This trip is one of many steps in the process of developing a new church-to-church relationship between Mennonite Church USA and two Mennonite churches in Congo. (See page 20.)

The relationship began when U.S. leaders approached Mennonite World Conference, asking how to develop one of four goals of Mennonite Church USA: nurturing global relationships. MWC suggested Mennonites in Congo as a partner for Mennonite Church USA because of their similar membership size and countless spiritual gifts.

This relationship could take years and may not truly develop until the next generation takes leadership positions.

Congolese church leaders agree with the importance of the person-to-person element in this church-to-church relationship.

During a joint debriefing session in Kinshasa, provincial president of the Congo Evangelical Mennonite Church, Alfonse Tshiala, reminded the delegation that this relationship must benefit people in the congregations; it cannot simply be an effort from church leaders.

Members of the delegation have returned to their homes and congregations carrying slips of paper with contact information from the Congolese Mennonites. Not all members will remain in contact with everyone they gave or received contact information from, but it's surely a start. Friendships will continue to blossom through individuals' correspondence and mutual prayer.

In Kinshasa, I had the privilege of meeting with five Congolese Mennonite journalism students. Through translation, we shared our professional goals and interests in journalism. This common ground, a shared professional interest, allowed us to exchange ideas as peers, as well as brothers and sisters in Christ. While the details of our professions vary, our common interest in communication provided a basis for connection.

Since the timeline for the relationship is a mystery, future delegations should continue to include young people. This relationship could take years and may not truly develop until the next generation takes leadership positions. Having young people on board, American and Congolese, gives strength and longevity to the relationship.

Aside from the many connections made during the delegation, the many unknowns in this relationship could cause anxiety. No one can be sure where this relationship will go, although both groups anticipate that this is not the last delegation. This mysterious waiting will challenge the Western mindset of many U.S. Mennonites who often look for immediate, concrete answers.

But we don't have to wait to take action. We can learn more about our Congolese brothers and sisters by talking with members of the delegation, reading about the country, even corresponding with Congolese Mennonites. We can learn about the history of the church in Congo from organizations that have seen Congo through the years, such as MWC, African Inter-Mennonite Mission, Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Economic Development Associates, and support them. All these small, individual actions will contribute to the growth of this larger relationship.—*ag*

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

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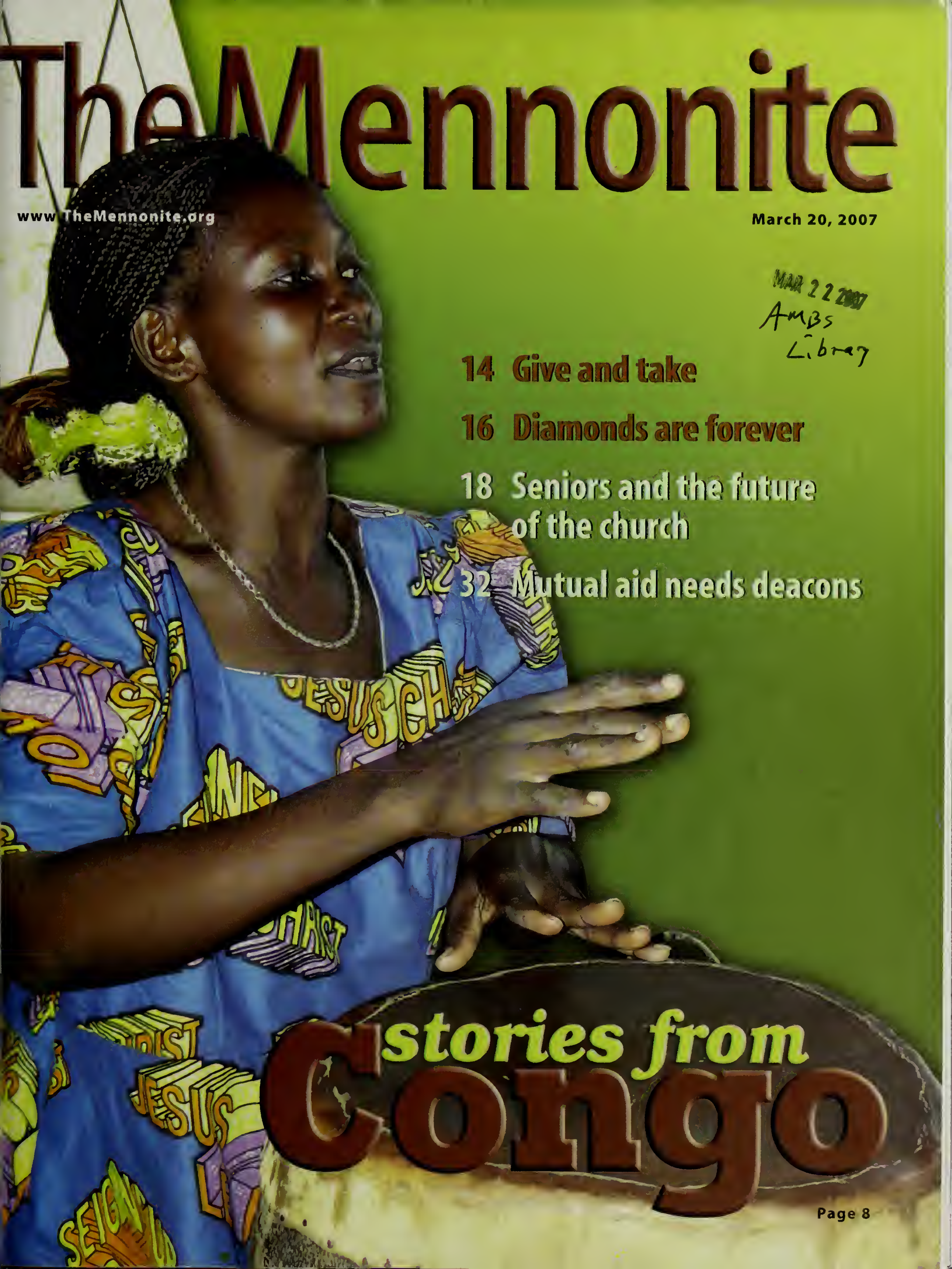

stories from Congo

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To those beloved by God and one another

Elaine Bryant is pastor emeritus at Englewood Mennonite Church in Chicago.

Correction: In Elaine's Jan. 16 column, her diagnosis is myeloma, not melanoma, and Englewood is the Lord's church, not hers.

God's love and care for humankind—individually and corporately—and our being called the beloved of God is justified by the well-known words of John 3:16. The Son, who was given, gave us a "new commandment" before he gave his life for our salvation from condemnation. That commandment in John 13:34 was taken seriously by the apostle John, as shown by words in a letter to his friend Gaius: "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as you soul prospers" (3 John 2, NJK).

John's words came to mind one morning as I thought of people I have been privileged to hear about, meet and interact with in the Mennonite church over the last 19 years.

The love in John 3:16 and alluded to in 3 John is not only a matter of warm, benevolent feelings from God or other humans but of God giving us wisdom, truth and grace—through the Lord Jesus and Christ-conformed Scriptures—in regard to the realities of life on earth with those who are not always loving. Three such realities are found in John 10:10 (NJK) and 16:33 (NJK): "The thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" and, "In the world you will have tribulation," but "be of good cheer" because Jesus has overcome the world.

I have asked about being of good cheer in the midst of tribulation. A helpful answer has been the Lord's overcoming the world and the pain of crucifixion and pangs of death that made possible the sending of the Spirit of Truth. With the help, leading and teaching of the Holy Spirit about wisdom for overcoming, we can experience joy, peace and victory in spite of satanically orchestrated or ignorantly generated troubles, heartaches and pains.

Ways and wisdom for overcoming can be derived from principles associated with the Scriptures. Paul put it this way in Romans 15:4 (NJK): "Whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience [perseverance] and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope [i.e. confident expectation]."

Since the Lord's words during his battle with satanic temptations after his baptism came from Deuteronomy and because of other helpful passages from that book, I studied it in the New Spirit-Filled Life Bible. Principles and insights from that study make up a "loving message to those beloved by God," including me.

In that Bible's "Truth-in-Action" on "Guidelines to Gaining Victory" are these words: "By studying warfare in the Old Testament, we can gain important principles that can be applied to any present spiritual conflict in which we find ourselves. … From both the triumphs and the defeats, we can learn how to walk in victory."

The section "Growing in Godliness" includes the following: "Deuteronomy explains God's covenant to a new generation—one on the brink of going forward to take their inheritance. In its lessons, today's believers will find the challenge to renew their commitment to remain holy and to love, honor, serve and cleave only to the Lord [rather than materialism or the god of forces]."

That same section includes words of warning: "Guard your heart so that you do not become complacent in prosperity."

In light of the divisions in this nation and in the church of Jesus along economic, political and racial/ethnic lines, this article and suggestion for the reading of the verses noted and heeding of the associated principles are part of this writer's desire and prayer like that of the apostle John for his friend. TM

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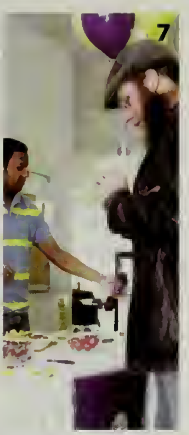
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Cover, pages 8-13: Photos by Anna Groff

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Zimbabweans need our help now

In the Feb. 6 issue, Mennonite Church USA executive director Jim Schrag responds to the needs of fellow Mennonites being overlooked in Mississippi after the horror of Hurricane Katrina. He says, "Somewhere it is going to happen again, and we are going to need to learn how to better channel mutual aid money to other members of the church."

Well, it is happening again, now. Just a few pages away in the same issue, Mennonite World Conference vice president and president-elect Bishop Danisa Ndlovu described oppression and hardship in his country of a magnitude we can scarcely bring ourselves to imagine.

I wonder what could be accomplished if we focused on the plight of our Anabaptist and Christian brothers and sisters around the world who do not have the luxury of our organizational concerns? Will we carry Jim Schrag's commitment not to make the same mistake again across international boundaries?—*Joy Kauffman, Tiskilwa, Ill.*

Practicable alternatives to violence

I read with interest Dennis Byler's piece "The Myth of Justified Violence" (Feb. 20) and agree with its basic premise—that human beings, including Christians, have imbibed the belief that violence is right and necessary for the sake of saving the innocent. Byler aptly identifies various sources of this belief in contemporary culture—including literature, films and folk tales for children. He includes the film *High Noon* among these.

While this classic Western is a moral tale, it deserves another look. Instead of seeing the film as exposing the impotency of pacifism, I interpret that film as a tragedy exposing the impotence of violence to put things right and restore peace. In a sense, *High Noon* is the "negative image" of the more recent film *Witness*. In the latter, violence and bloodshed are averted and the lives of the innocent are saved—not by threat of force met by greater counterforce—but by a community of faith gathered in solidarity with those whose lives are threatened. What both films show is that a community of faith shaped by the cross and united by mutual commitment to solidarity in suffering is necessary for human beings to live out practicable, peaceable alternatives to violence in the face of evil.—*Darrin W. Snyder Belousek, Elkhart, Ind.*

Is Lancaster Conference out of compliance?

Although the Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference Board of Bishops recommended allowing the ordination of women, the ministers in the conference voted against it ("Recommendation to Ordain Women Fails," Feb. 6). But according to Mennonite Church USA documents, women can be ordained for ministry. Does this mean that Lancaster Mennonite Conference is not in compliance with Mennonite Church USA? As a result, will they, too, become "nonvoting members"?—*Rosita Benner Derstine, Lemont, Pa.*

Editor's note: According to Executive Leadership, concerns between the 21 conferences that make up Mennonite Church USA or the actions of any particular conference are addressed directly between conference leaders and at the twice-per-year meeting of the Constituency Leaders Council. Any decision that would affect the membership status of an area conference in Mennonite Church USA would be the responsibility of the Delegate Assembly of Mennonite Church USA.

Network open to all

Re the March 6 News Digest article by Anna Groff (page 6): Anabaptist Network is an independent, online networking tool for anyone of any age and is maintained by volunteers. It is not sponsored by or directed specifically toward those within Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA but welcomes all who are Anabaptist-oriented. Administrative members of the Anabaptist Network are Lora Steiner, Dave Landis, Hinke Loewen-Rudgers and Tim Nafziger.—*Hinke Loewen-Rudgers, Winnipeg, Manitoba*

Violent Muslims see themselves as rational

In the Feb. 20 issue, Steve Dintaman well analyzes Pope Benedict XVI comments on Islam (Speaking Out). But a little more needs to be said about Islam and reason. The Pope erred when he suggested that violence fits hand-in-hand with irra-

IN THIS ISSUE

Assistant editor Anna Groff was a member of the Mennonite Church USA delegation that visited the Democratic Republic of Congo in early February. This visit was the beginning of a church-to-church relation between our denomination and Congolese Mennonites. On pages 8-13, Anna provides some history of the Congolese church and introduces us to five Congolese leaders. On page 14, Marathana Prothro describes the challenges faced by the Congolese church with communities unable to communicate with each other. Ron Byler (page 16) describes the challenges of "gift-giving" between Mennonite Church USA and the Congolese Mennonites. It is not clear where this church-to-church relationship will take us, but we begin by learning about a few of these sisters and brothers in the global Mennonite family.—*Editor* tionality in Islam. Activist Muslims—whether moderate or extreme—typically claim that Islam is profoundly rational. Several Muslim intellectuals reiterated this point in response to the Pope. Ironically, Muslims often draw on the same traditions of ancient Greek rationality that the Pope says are part and parcel of Christianity. While there is a stream of Islamic theology that places God above reason, that is not the stream inspiring radical Islam today. Muslim groups that turn to violence do not see themselves obeying the dictates of a capricious God. Rather they understand their causes to be perfectly just and rational.

We need a deeper antidote to violence than the reason of the Greeks. We need a Jesus rationality.—*Jon Hoover, Beirut, Lebanon*

Force or violence

I was glad to see someone in an official position tackle the issue of "force or violence" (Feb. 20 editorial). The distinction is at least implicitly present already in the writings of Menno Simons, and all through the last half-century, Mennonite debates on our peace position have discussed it at paternal and family levels of responsibility—but not at police levels.

I note the Latin root for "violence" is the same as for "violate." Behaviors, attitudes and reactions that violate the human integrity of others are violent. Force used to restrain one person from violating another respects the human integrity of both. As Everett Thomas indicates in the editorial, the use of potentially lethal force remains the ethically troubling question. But even here the distinction between violating or respecting the troublemaker as a person in God's image is applicable. Acting within just legal limits and guidelines is a minimal way to respect those who threaten violence.

I assume that Thomas is implying, therefore, that police force is a moral option for nonviolent Christians.—*C. Norman Kraus, Harrisonburg, Va.*

I appreciate Everett J. Thomas' efforts in the Feb. 20 editorial to sort through distinctions between kinds of force ("Force or Violence"). There is a huge moral distinction between using force as a means to a good end and as a last resort versus using it as a means to a bad end and when there are other options. That said, Thomas' position seems to be a form of just war theory.

Almost everyone—Christian or not—agrees with the basic premise of those theories: Violence should be avoided except when it is a last resort, for a good end and kept to a minimum. The problem is that Jesus' teachings and example seem to reject even that sort of force. Maybe it was a mistake for Mennonites to have mostly dropped the word "nonresistance," since the words that have replaced it can more easily be reconciled with actions in conflict with Jesus' teachings and example.

If this world really is just the first chapter of eternity for us all, and if God calls us to an absolute love that values active nonresistant love toward every person—even over the protection of lives and peace—then the teachings and example of Jesus are available to guide us.—*John Zimmerman, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa*

Church members need our support

The side note in the March 6 News Digest—dealing with how many days we have been in Iraq—was followed by *Yes!* I assume that is a sarcastic yes, since we have now been in Iraq longer than World War II lasted. This is disrespectful to the members of our churches who have family members and friends in Iraq. As a church we do not have to be happy with what is going on in Iraq, but church members who are dealing with this need our support and prayers, not our sarcasm.—*Jim Neff, Wauseon, Ohio*

Editor's note: Yes! *is the name of a magazine published by the Positive Futures Network.*

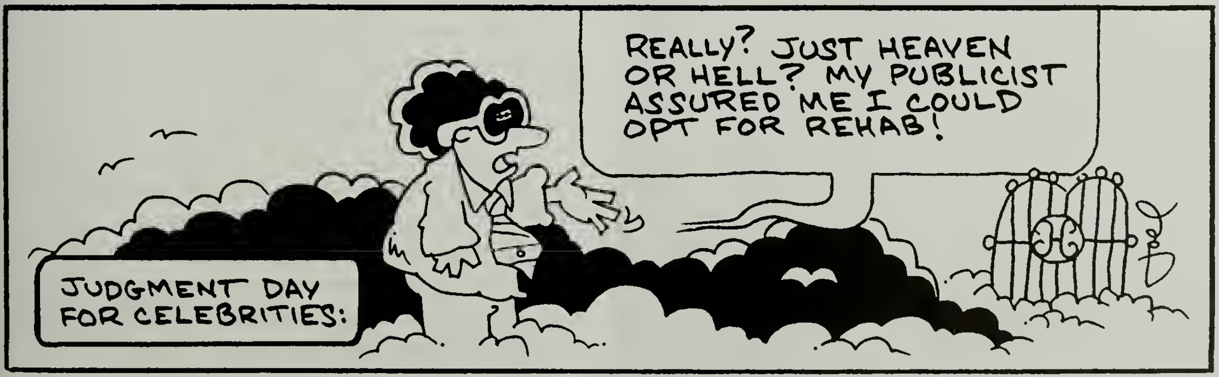
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

A church-to-church relationship with Mennonites in Congo would: (52 votes)

- ○ Strengthen Mennonite Church USA (63%)
- ○ Make no difference (15%)
- ○ It's too soon to tell (21%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


JUDGMENT DAY FOR CELEBRITIES:
REALLY? JUST HEAVEN OR HELL? MY PUBLICIST ASSURED ME I COULD OPT FOR REHAB!

IN BRIEF

Web connects Hutterites to CMU

Before each history class for Hutterites in January and February at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, John J. Friesen asked, "Can you hear me?" He wasn't asking the 50 or so Hutterite students meeting in CMU's chapel about the volume level. He was talking to students he could see on a computer screen at the front of the room—students from colonies in Minnesota, South Dakota and Manitoba who were attending the course via the World Wide Web. Satisfied the link worked, Friesen launched into his lecture about Hutterite faith and life. Although he has taught six courses for Hutterites over the past seven years at CMU, this was the first time the Web was used to provide classes for colonies farther away from Winnipeg.—*CMU*

Iraq numbers

- Number of Iraqis who have fled the country since the war began in 2003: 2 million
- Number of refugees from Iraq admitted to the United States since the war began: 466
- Number of Iraqi refugees admitted in 2001 alone: 2,473
- Approximate proportion of refugees fleeing Iraq who are Christians: one-third

—*Christianity Today* and *The Christian Century*

MCC shipping supplies to displaced Iraqis

WINNIPEG—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is responding to the growing humanitarian needs in Iraq, where persistent violence and civil tensions are driving people from their homes.

About 500,000 Iraqis have fled their homes for other areas inside Iraq in the past year, and internal displacement continues at a rate of about 50,000 people per month, says Rick Janzen, co-director of MCC's Middle East and European programming.

In response to the growing humanitarian needs, MCC is sending 4,200 relief kits, 11,000 newborn kits, 22,000 school kits and 16,000 blankets to be distributed by local humanitarian agencies working with vulnerable families in Baghdad and surrounding communities.

The first three containers will be sent in early March from MCC warehouses in Canada and the United States. Four more containers will be sent within the next few months.

UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency, reports the population movements in Iraq show no sign of abating. The agency estimates that the number of internally displaced Iraqis now totals over 1.7 million. Most were displaced prior to 2003 but an estimated 500,000 people have been displaced since the Samarra bombings in February 2006.—*MCC*

Jantzen laid mission foundation in India

NEWTON, Kan.—When he was 19, Lubin W. Jantzen heard a call from God that guided his life's work: "Lubin, I want you in India."

Lubin Jantzen

Jantzen died on Feb. 25, at Schowalter Villa in Hesston, Kan., at the age of 90. He was born May 25, 1916, to Frank F. Jantzen and Anna Wiebe Jantzen, at their home near Paso Robles, Calif. He was baptized and joined Willow Creek Mennonite Church in 1932.

On Aug. 6, 1943, he married Matilda (Tillie) Mueller, whom he had met during his student days in Los Angeles. They left by boat in March 1947 and arrived in Bombay a month later, serving with the former General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) Board of Missions.

The Jantzens' first term in India lasted seven years. Jantzen was in charge of evangelistic work in Jagdeeshpur. He kept records of salary and allowance payments to local pastors and their assistants and did Bible teaching, preaching and evangelistic tours to other villages. He was secretary-treasurer for the mission conference.

Jantzen later worked in Janjgir and Korba, working with Mennonite schools and churches. From 1968 to 1976, he served as personnel secretary for the former (GC) Commission on Overseas Mission, based in Newton.

From 1976 to 1982 the Jantzens served at Union Biblical Seminary, now located in Pune.

From 1983 to 1990, he served as associate pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton.

Jantzen is survived by Tillie, his wife, of Schowalter Villa, Hesston; one daughter, Esther Jantzen of Pomona, Calif.; three sons, Dan and Betty Jantzen of Arvada, Colo., Jim and Susan Jantzen of Newton, and Jonathan and Mary Beth Jantzen of Tucson, Ariz.; one sister, Anne, of Stockton, Calif.; seven grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Photo provided

Bible quizzing in India

Team Love celebrates after winning first place in the Bible quiz finals at an Eastern Mennonite Missions partner school in north India. A Bible quiz team of four young adults from eastern Pennsylvania helped launch a Bible quizzing program at a school run by a partner of EMM in north India. Team leader Jason Ranck, from Parkesburg, Pa., says 99 percent of the school's 450 students come from Hindu or Sikh background. Open evangelization in the region is not possible, but the local community welcomes the Christian school and the services it provides.—*EMM*

Mary Becker Valencia: a lifetime of service

NEWTON, Kan.—Mary Becker Valencia wanted to be a missionary and a teacher since she was a child. Those interests came together for her in a lifetime of service in Colombia with Mennonite and Presbyterian ministries.

Valencia was born Aug. 2, 1913, on the farm of her parents, Eva and John Becker, near Newton. She died Feb. 18 in Bogotá, Colombia, at age 93.

She completed a bachelor's degree in 1940 at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., with majors in Bible and German. Before going on for a master's in religious education at New York

Jodi H. Beyeler

ion Free Day at Goshen thanks donors
hen (Ind.) College senior Bible and religion major Neal
sen (right) of Henderson, Neb., writes a note of thanks to a
or during the March 7 Tuition Free Day, while senior art
or Jesse Johnson of Minneapolis, Minn., helps. The day cel-
ted the generosity of alumni, friends and businesses who
make the education more affordable and built awareness
tuition students pay covers approximately 66 percent of
cost to educate them for one year.—*Goshen College*

Theological Seminary, she served as interim editor of *The Mennonite* in 1941.

Valencia became one of the first four mission workers sent to Colombia by the former General Conference Mennonite Church Board of Missions in 1945. They began a boarding school on a farm at Cachipay for children whose parents suffered from leprosy. Students there went on to become church leaders, teachers, nurses, lawyers, administrators and workers in a variety of technical and professional fields.

With her marriage to Héctor Valencia on Jan. 1, 1950, Mary began serving with him in various Presbyterian ministries. She served in the Mennonite school Colegio Americano, teaching English, religion, home economics and as a counselor and director of the primary department.

Valencia is survived by two children, María Victoria of Bogotá, Colombia, and Daniel Alfonso of Heidelberg, Germany, and two grandchildren. *—Mennonite Mission Network*

Bethany students win essay contest

WASHINGTON—For the first time ever, winners of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Washington Office Annual Public Policy Essay Contest were from the same school.

Students from Bethany Christian High School in Goshen, Ind., took first, second and third prizes in the contest, which drew submissions from across the United States.

The Washington Office holds its annual essay contest to promote churchwide awareness of significant public policy issues and to encourage youth understanding of the relationship of faith to public policy. This year, students were asked to write essays on one of four topics: the U.S.-Iran nuclear conflict, climate change, U.S. border policy or military recruitment.

Matt Thomas claimed first place for his essay "Have Dominion Over the Earth," which challenges the belief that the earth's condition is irrelevant for Christians because Christ will return.

Meg Kennel, who took second, also wrote about climate change. "Christians have a biblical, moral and spiritual obligation to nurture the earth," she wrote, "... not only because they have been given stewardship of the planet but also because they are compelled to care for our global family."

Rachel Lanctot and Hannah Roth tied for third place. Lanctot addressed unjust military recruitment, calling the current enrollment system a "poverty draft." Roth explored the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border and urged readers to pay attention to the welfare of individuals.*—MCC*

Bluffton hosts intercollegiate peace group

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Sixty students attended the annual gathering of Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship (ICPF) Feb. 23-25 at Bluffton University.

Participants came from Bluffton, Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., Earlham College in Richmond, Ind., Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., and Goshen (Ind.) College.

ICPF gathers students and faculty from Mennonite, Brethren and Quaker colleges. This year's theme was "Coming Together as Peacemakers."

Cynthia Lapp, pastor of Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church, spoke on meditation and body prayer. Students led workshops on how they can be active peacemakers and gave presentations on issues on their campuses.*—Bluffton University*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Wiebe receives Taylor Prize

Mennonite author Rudy Wiebe of Edmonton, Alta., was awarded the 2007 Charles Taylor Prize for Literary Non-Fiction on Feb. 26. The prize, which carries a $25,000 (Cdn.) award, was given for his memoir *Of This Earth: A Mennonite Boyhood in the Boreal Forest* (Knopf). The Taylor Prize is the largest of its kind in Canada. Wiebe, 72, who has taught at Goshen (Ind.) College and the University of Alberta, grew up in Fairholme, Sask., in a Low German-speaking Mennonite Brethren family. *—Mennonite Weekly Review*

Common ground at sustainable farming conference

Laurelville Mennonite Church Center's fourth annual sustainable farming conference gathered 100 participants and presenters Feb. 23-25 under the theme "Farming with Values that Last: Standing on Common Ground." The group shared experiences, insights and dreams in sustainable agriculture. Fred Kirschenmann, distinguished fellow of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University, was keynote speaker for the weekend. He discussed four major challenges we face: energy, water, climate change and reduced genetic/biological diversity. His keynote addresses are available online at www.laurelville.org. *—LMCC*

Stories from Congo

A church-to-church relationship

To explore a church-to-church relationship between two Mennonite conferences in Congo and Mennonite Church USA, a delegation of 13 people traveled to the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Central Africa, for two weeks in February.

The group, of various ages and church positions, spent a week in the capital, Kinshasa, and another week divided into smaller groups (see box, page 11) to visit three Mennonite communities in more rural areas, staying in homes and visiting churches.

The conversation between Mennonite Church USA and leaders of the Congolese churches began at the Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Zimbabwe in 2003. Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, says a church-to-church relationship works to meet one of the denomination's goals of nurturing global relationships.

Schrag told delegation members and church leaders during a debriefing session three reasons for a church-to-church relationship with the two Mennonite groups in Congo: the churches are similar in size, both have resources and gifts to share, and the Congo church thrived during and after its missionary presence.—*Anna Groff*

JESUS CHRIST
JESUS

A woman drums at the church at the Congo Mennonite Church headquarters in Tshikapa during a sending worship service for the delegation members on Feb. 12.

A message of peace

by Anna Groff

The democratic election in 2006 brings some hope to Congo, but the memories of past devastation remain. Congolese people faced violent colonization, government corruption and two wars from 1996 to 2003.

In 2006, Congo ranked number two in the list of failed states, behind Sudan and before Cote D'Ivoire. Failed states can no longer provide basic functions, such as education, governance or security, due to violence or poverty.

Mennonite churches bring Christ's message of peace to these dismal times. While meeting with the delegation members who traveled to Tshikapa in February, Pastor Kikuga Mavule, a provincial president in Tshikapa, said war has many dimensions. Weapon violence is one dimension, but there is also violence in people's hearts.

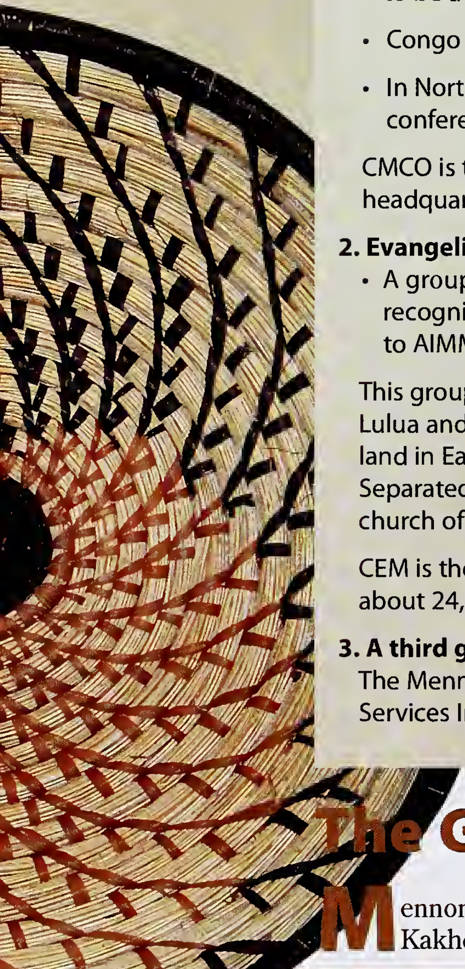
The social dimensions of peace involve resources for people, Mavule added. "A person who can't eat and is hungry can't have peace," he said, and it's the same for shelter and education. Mavule said the message of peace always has importance and relevance and should not be neglected during conflicts within the church.

Mavule cited the late Mukanza Ilunga as the person who emphasized the peace message in Congolese Mennonite churches. Ilunga, who grew up at the mission station in Kandala, attended Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., in 1975 and graduated with a master's degree in Christian education.

Ilunga returned to Congo, served as a Congo Mennonite Church (CMCO) leader and worked closely with missionary Levi Keidel. In 1979 and 1980 he attended three Mennonite World Conference-sponsored international peace commissions. In 1981 he organized a seminar on nonviolence for all three Mennonite groups in Congo: CMCO, Congo Evangelical Mennonite Church (CEM) and the Mennonite Brethren Church of the Congo.

Ilunga became a major voice for Mennonites in Congo, according to Jim Bertsche, who served in Congo for 25 years and wrote a history of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission. With Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Ilunga started a partnership, National Inter-Mennonite Committee (CONIM), among the three Mennonite groups in Congo to promote Anabaptist concerns for peace, love and justice in Congo.

Mavule said seminars on evangelism and peace continue at various capacities in Congo. Last year, representatives of the churches and MCC sponsored four day-long seminars in seven locations in Congo. Pastors then returned to their congregations to share what they learned.



Church histories

(From *Anabaptist Songs in African Hearts,* Good Books, 2006 and Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission)

1. Congo Mennonite Church (CMCO)

- Congo Inland Mission (CIM) formed in 1912. After independence in Congo in 1960, CIM ceases to be a legal entity.
- Congo Mennonite Church formed in 1960, and relates to African Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM).
- In North America, in 1972, CIM became AIMM, now a partnership of six North American Mennonite conferences.

CMCO is the first and largest Mennonite church in Congo with its membership listed as 85,400. Its headquarters are in Tshikapa, West Kasai.

2. Evangelical Mennonite Church (CEM)

- A group of Congolese Mennonites in the province East Kasai organized in 1962 obtained legal recognition in 1966 and later became Evangelical Mennonite Community (CEM) in 1970. CEM relates to AIMM.

This group formed after the independence in 1960 and conflict occurred between two groups, the Lulua and Baluba. The Baluba people, including many Mennonites, returned to their traditional homeland in East Kasai, where AIMM and Mennonite Central Committee worked with rehabilitation. Separated by geography and political barriers, they organized themselves as a second Mennonite church of Congo.

CEM is the smallest of three Mennonite-related conferences in Congo, with 86 congregations and about 24,000 members. Its headquarters are in Mbuji Mayi, East Kasai.

3. A third group

The Mennonite Brethren Church of the Congo, which relates to Mennonite Brethren Mission and Services International and AIMM, is also in Congo, but not part of the church-to-church relationship.

The Great Commission

Mennonites in Congo evangelize within Congo and in surrounding countries. Pastor Damien Kakhenda, coordinator of missions for Congo Mennonite Church (CMCO) in Tshikapa, says in past decades only foreigners were seen as "missionaries," and Congolese people only served as pastors. Now both can carry the term missionary.

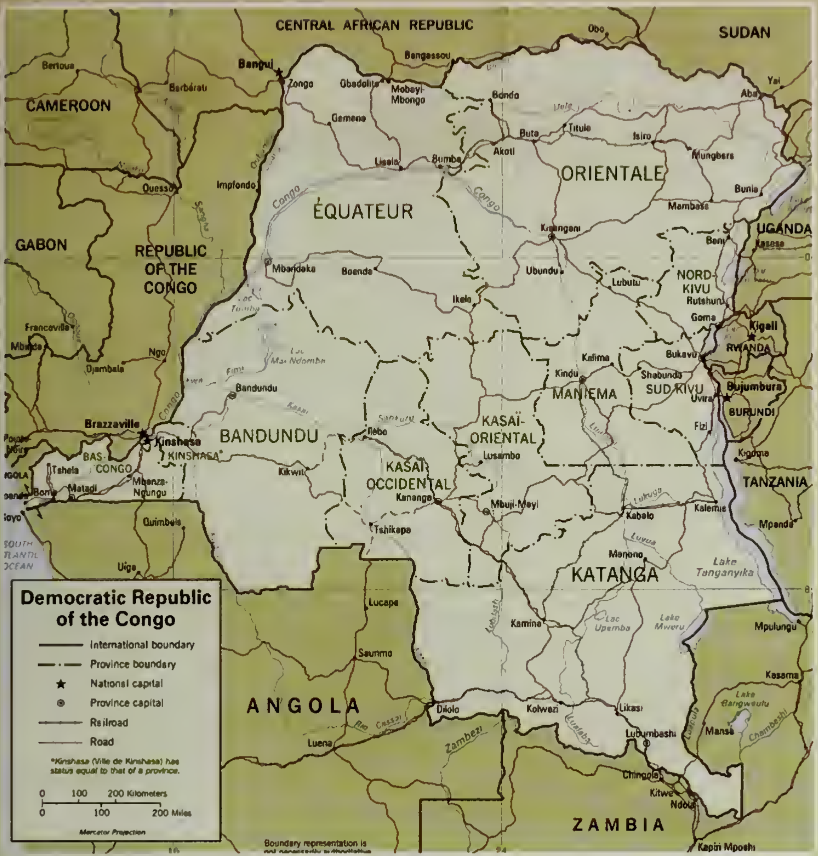
Damien Kakhenda

Kakhenda says members of CMCO feel called to follow the Great Commission. For example, Kakhenda says the CMCO churches consider Télésphore Nsengimana "their missionary." Nsengimana, a Catholic man from Rwanda who came to Congo as a refugee, married a Mennonite woman in Congo and became a Mennonite.

About seven months ago, Nsengimana returned to Rwanda and hopes to plant a church to bring the message of peace. The message is important for people here in the middle of a crisis, he says.

Earlier, Kakhenda himself sought possibilities for church planting. In 1998, he traveled to Republic of Congo (the country west of the Democratic Republic of Congo) with funding from Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission. During Congo's Civil War in 1997, people in Tshikapa had helped the refugees from Congo, and in turn those refugees suggested the idea for a church plant in Congo. However, the CMCO church lacked funding.

Kakhenda says people feel encouraged to see Congolese missionaries. He says Komuesa Kalunga Adolphe, president of CMCO, has freed up the administration and made it less centralized so this "work of the Spirit" can occur.—*Anna Groff*


CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
SUDAN
CAMEROON
GABON
REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
UGANDA
RWANDA
BURUNDI
TANZANIA
ANGOLA
ZAMBIA
ÉQUATEUR
ORIENTALE
NORD-KIVU
SUD-KIVU
MANIEMA
KASAÏ-ORIENTAL
KASAÏ OCCIDENTAL
BANDUNDU
BAS-CONGO
KINSHASA
KATANGA
Bangui
Brazzaville
Kinshasa
Kigali
Bujumbura
Matadi
Tshela
Kikwit
Bandundu
Mbandaka
Kisangani
Bunia
Goma
Bukavu
Kindu
Kananga
Mbuji-Mayi
Tshikapa
Kalemie
Kamina
Likasi
Lubumbashi
Kolwezi
Lake Tanganyika
Democratic Republic of the Congo
International boundary
Province boundary
National capital
Province capital
Railroad
Road
*Kinshasa (Ville de Kinshasa) has status equal to that of a province.
0 100 200 Kilometers
0 100 200 Miles
Mercator Projection
Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative

Democratic Republic of Congo

Location: Central Africa, north of Angola

Capital: Kinshasa

Area size: Slightly smaller than ¼ of the United States land

Population: 62,660,551

Religions: Roman Catholic 50 percent; Protestant 20 percent; Kimbanguist (Christian branch native to Congo) 10 percent; Muslim 10 percent; and other 10 percent.

Language: French is the official, with additional languages

Delegation members and where they traveled in the interior:

Tshikapa, headquarters of CMCO
Addie Banks, Bronx, N.Y.
Ruth Keidel Clemens, Baltimore, Md.
Anna Groff, Harrisonburg, Va.
Jim Schrag, Newton, Kan.

Mbuji Mayi, headquarters of CEM
Ron Byler, Goshen, Ind.
James Wenger, Baltimore, Md.
Suzanne Lind, Three Rivers, Mich.
Keith Wilson, Dyer, Ind.
Sharon Waltner, Parker, S.D.

Kitwit
Stanley Green, Goshen, Ind.
Steve Penner, Reedley, Calif.
Marathana Prothro, Newton, Kan.
Vicki Smucker, South Bend, Ind.

Democratic Republic of Congo timeline

1908—Established as a Belgian colony

1960—Gained independence

1965—Col. Joseph Mobutu declared himself president in 1965 and changed his name to Mobutu Sese Seko, as well as the country's name to Zaire.

1997—Mobutu's regime ends by Laurent Kabila's rebellion and the country is renamed Democratic Republic of the Congo.

1998—Multinational war breaks out

1999—Cease-fire signed, but some fighting continues

2001—Laurent Kabila assassinated, so Joseph Kabila, his son, is named head of state

2002—Kabila is successful in negotiating withdraw of Rwandan forces in eastern Congo

2003—Transitional government set up with Kabila as president, along with four vice presidents representing the former government, former rebel groups and political opposition

2006—Kabila inaugurated president in December after democratic elections

Patrick Mulumba

Patrick Mulumba pastors the church at the CMCO headquarters in Tshikapa. Mulumba, a pastor for 17 years, says 200 people attend the church on an average Sunday. Some Sundays are particularly full, and children climb in and out of the open-air windows, he says with a smile.

At Mulumba's church, the words, "Look at only Jesus" are painted on the front wall in Tshiluba, a tribal language in that region. Children, youth and older adults make up most of the attendance. Mulumba says middle-age people are often away from home looking for work, so they cannot regularly attend church services.

Mulumba says he remembers when missionaries told the Congolese not to be too loud or to use drums during worship services, but now they include dancing and drumming.

Mulumba grew up Catholic but began to interpret the Bible on his own as a young adult, so he became a Mennonite. He says his favorite aspect of serving as a pastor is preaching.—*Anna Groff*

Lambertine Mumbanda

Lambertine Mumbanda, the president of Congo Mennonite Church's (CMCO) women's groups, grew up in Nyanga and attended a Mennonite girls' school. While growing up, she witnessed the leadership of women older than her. "We saw how our mothers served Christ in churches growing up," she says.

Mumbanda specifically admired Mama Kafuchi, the president of women's groups at the time. Mumbanda said she taught the other women about family life, serving in the church and housework. When Kafuchi (and her predecessor) grew old, Mumbanda felt called to take their places, to serve as the third generation of woman presidents. "I have accepted the work of God," Mumbanda says.

She says women make up 70 to 90 percent of the church, as most men are out looking for work, so they cannot regularly participate. Tshikapa has an unemployment rate of over 90 percent.

As president, Mumbanda facilitates visits to sick women, holds offerings for them and chairs meetings of women's groups. Mumbanda prays while she walks seven kilometers to her work in Tshikapa, the headquarters of CMCO. She has three daughters and one son, and her husband is a businessman. Transportation remains a major difficulty for Congolese Mennonites in Tshikapa, with flooded and rocky roads.—*Anna Groff*

Adolphine Tshiama

Adolphine Tshiama, a director of a primary school in Tshikapa, says she values education for women in the church.

At her wedding, her father gave her two gifts: a Bible and a songbook. He told her, Whether you have an education or not, a husband or not, the Bible will always give you strength.

"Women come from various levels of intellect," Tshiama says. Without knowing how to read and write, one cannot study Scripture and grow spiritually, she says. Many women in Congo marry young and are illiterate, and men are given priority in education, she says.

Before she officially became a church leader, she counseled other women during difficult family, marriage and spiritual circumstances. Now she is "on call" for counseling day and night.

She also helps women start small business ventures at the market, such as selling food or clothing and gives seminars on cooking, sewing and HIV/AIDS education. The women's groups also designed a fabric with the logo for the CMCO church and made dresses and shirts from it.—*Anna Groff*

David Mundayi

David Mundayi, director of Agricultural Development Service in Nyanga, says communities like Nyanga have evangelism, but it is not enough to sustain their lives.

In March 2006, Mundayi restarted the Agricultural Development Service in Nyanga, which Fremont Regier began in the 1970s. The service provides rabbits, pigs and beef to people in villages and offers animal-raising education. It's a project of the church but serves all people, whether they are part of the church or not, he says.

Komuesa Kalunga Adolphe, president of CMCO, invited him to re-establish the program and provided funds and resources, such as a motorcycle for Mundayi to use for transportation to villages.

Mundayi, who studied economics at the University of Kinshasa, initially thought the project would be easy but now realizes the challenges of working with a small budget. Still, Mundayi says, it's been successful, especially through the help of volunteers. They started with eight rabbits and now have more than 50; they started with three pigs and now have 15. Mundayi has hopes one day to run a large rabbit reproduction center.—*Anna Groff*

James Kamba

James Kamba, an ophthalmologist and writer, grew up at the missionary station at Kalonda. The mission station included missionary homes, a hospital, primary and secondary schools, a church building and service buildings, such as a garage. The buildings remain and continue to function, even with limited resources such as medication, education supplies and more.

As a child, Kamba attended the Mennonite schools and church at Kalonda and was baptized. As he grew, he had Bible studies with missionaries and volunteered at the hospital, but he said he did not have a personal encounter with Christ. "Many years passed, but I was not a Christian," he says.

At age 20, Kamba had a vision of a man in his home. This vision convicted him of his sins, and at that point he became a Christian, he says. "I began to go to church in a different way. … I understood Jesus is here," he says. "The Jesus I have now is my own Jesus." Kamba says he has experienced God's grace through physical healing and protection by angels while traveling.

Kamba still lives in Kalonda with his wife and eight children, and he practices ophthalmology in Tshikapa. Kamba also writes church music, more than 100 songs in several languages, as well as proverbs.—*Anna Groff*

Give & take

Mennonites in Congo and Mennonite Church USA seek to learn from each other.

by Marathana Prothro

Mennonites in the Bandundu region of the Congo are no strangers to a lack of infrastructure and economic opportunity. But just as they struggle to find adequate transportation and make ends meet, they're equally adept at celebrating and sharing the healing and hope Jesus brings them.

Laurent Kamizelo, General Secretary for Communauté Mennonite au Congo (CMCO), one of three Mennonite denominations in the Congo, in February led four members of a Mennonite Church USA delegation to the Congo through Kikwit, Mukedi and Gungu educating the delegation on what life is really like for Mennonites in the province and encouraging relationship-building between Congolese and American Mennonites.

> **We have birthed many new churches, but because of a lack of transportation and communication we haven't done as well as we could.**
> —Eddy Ngumba

The progress toward relationship-building happened as the group visited nine congregations in six villages and cities. Through open and direct mutual exchange, the Congolese and Americans were able to begin understanding each other and recognizing not only each other's needs but each other's strengths as well.

"We were initially struggling with the differences between the two groups," Kamizelo said, referring to American and Congolese Mennonites. "But once we were able to enter into exchange and be honest with each other and learn about our strengths and needs, we were able to make progress."

"By experiencing each other's lives as they really are and you seeing us in our current situation, we've begun the process of building this relationship," said Joseph Malu-a-Gimena, a pastor and secondary school principal in Mukedi. "We're getting to know you better by eating meals with you and worshiping with you."

The four U.S. delegates—Vicki Smucker of South Bend, Ind., Stanley Green of Goshen, Ind., Steve Penner of Reedley, Calif., and Marathana Prothro of Newton, Kan.—began their journey Feb. 5 in Kikwit, a city of about 500,000 people.

From Kikwit, the group drove six hours to the former Mukedi mission station. Situated atop the savannah with cool breezes, tall green grasses and palm trees, Mukedi is a strong symbol of early relationships between North American and Congolese Mennonites. It's home to multiple vibrant CMCO congregations and has a hospital, health center, schools and old missionary homes.

Mukedi is cut off from the rest of Congo and CMCO. There are no paved roads. There's no electricity (except that produced by a generator) or cell phone coverage (which is available in many other areas) near or in the area. Those who want to use the Internet must travel to either Kikwit or Tshikapa, both of which entail several days' walk. However, the isolation Mennonites in Mukedi feel is not only a result of the lack of transportation and communication infrastructure. Decades ago, North American Mennonites handed control of the Mennonite churches in Congo over to Congolese church leaders, which may have, over time, influenced how Congolese Mennonites view the history of their relationship with Americans.

At Mukedi, the Mennonite Church USA delegation heard comments and questions related to how the leadership transition affected Congolese Mennonites and explained that, while they were unsure where this new relationship would lead, both groups were there to discern how the relationship should be formed and maintained.

"A friend is also there in the suffering and bad times. In our time of suffering, we felt left out in

Let the children come: In Mukedi, the site of the former Mukedi Mission Station, congregations are working to improve educational opportunities for children in their community. About half the children in Mukedi, including these pictured, are unable to go to school.

the cold," said one pastor. "How are we going to go from here and build this relationship?"

"There are two ways to look at what happened," Green responded. "One is that it was a mistake. The second is to say it provided a way for the Congolese and Americans to move down the road to come together as equals and that maybe it was a part of God's plan for preparing us for this new kind of relationship."

While traveling from Mukedi to Gungu Feb. 8, the delegation visited CMCO congregations in Kinzanga, Dongo Selengi and Lozo, where it was greeted with waving palm branches and traditional music. After arriving four hours late in Gungu due to poor travel conditions and lengthy visits in the smaller villages, the group was greeted by more than 20 leaders from the Central Bandundu District for CMCO in the Gungu area.

In Gungu, the group visited two congregations and had an exchange Feb. 9 with many district and lay leaders from the area. Evangelism, health care, education and development were cited as the most important topics for the Central Bandundu District.

"The gift of evangelization and prayer is what we have. We have birthed many new churches, but because of a lack of transportation and communication we haven't done as well as we could," said pastor Eddy Ngumba.

Evangelists in the area often spend days walking from place to place to share their message and help equip others in the district to be more effective in their evangelism efforts. Some use bicycles, which helps but doesn't necessarily make the journey easy, since Gungu sits on a steep hill with poor, sandy, clay-like roads.

While the evangelists travel and other men seek work, many women in Gungu are left to maintain their homes and support the life of the church. According to church leaders, women comprise up to 90 percent of the Congolese Mennonite churches. In Gungu, Bena Kangaji, a pastor's wife and English teacher, asked the women in the delegation how women in the United States contribute to the work of the church.

"I rejoice to see women in the delegation," Kangaji said. "What are women in the [United States] doing in terms of development to help support the work of the church? How are women contributing to the church's future?"

According to Kamizelo, CMCO is working to encourage more women and congregations to see the potential for women in leadership roles within the church.

"It's important for them to see two men and two women who are not married as being sent from the American Mennonite church," Kamizelo said. "It shows that in America you don't just talk about equality, you take it seriously. It's what we're working for, but it will continue to take time."

Time is one thing both the Congolese and American church leaders agree will be needed to continue the process of building a relationship. Penner said it's a process that will need to have significant input from both sides for each group to give and receive the most possible benefits from the relationship.

"We need to evaluate together the strengths and needs of each other," Penner said. "The Congolese have good insights to give us about our weaknesses and needs as they see them, just as we are able to do the same for them, but it has to be a process that we go through together as equals."

Marathana Prothro is interim director of communications for Mennonite Church USA and attends Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan.

Diamonds are forever

Mennonites in Congo and Mennonite Church USA learn together.

by Ron Byler

On the road from Mbuji Mayi through the diamond fields, Reverend Benjamin Mubenga was asked by passersby if he was taking his white passengers to see diamonds.

Mubenga, president of the Communaute Evangelique Mennonite, said he was on his way to visit churches. Much later, his passengers, five members of the Mennonite Church USA delegation to Congo, agreed that Mubenga was helping to shape diamonds of a different kind—congregations in the Eastern Kasai province of CEM that serve Jesus in their communities.

The group was part of a church-to-church visit in Congo, Feb. 2-16, to help build new relationships between Mennonite denominations in Congo and the United States with the encouragement of Mennonite World Conference.

On the diamond trail, the delegation, accompanied by church leaders of CEM, traveled more than five hours in an SUV over rut-filled, washed-out roads to visit three Congolese congregations near Tshintshianku, just 60 miles outside Mbuji Mayi. They visited nearly a dozen parishes in total.

Through your music and prayer, you've nurtured our spirits.—Suzanne Lind

East Kasai is one of four provinces of CEM, the smallest of three Mennonite-related conferences in Congo, with 86 congregations and about 24,000 members.

Just under two-thirds of its members and parishes are in the East Kasai province the delegation visited. The delegation flew from Kinshasa to Mbuji Mayi, a city of about 2 million people and the headquarters of CEM.

CEM administers 60 schools with about 10,000 students. The church receives some payment from the government, but it is far less support than is needed to run the schools effectively.

In addition to training 25 new evangelists, CEM leaders said their goals include expanding their office facilities and building a health center, primary and secondary schools and homes for some of their leaders on the land surrounding the Dipumba parish in Mbuyi Mayi.

Leaders from churches in both countries agreed it is difficult to build mature relationships in which both churches can give and receive gifts. Mennonite Church USA delegation members repeatedly felt expectations in the parishes that the Americans had come to give them money, despite Congolese leaders' assertions each time that the visit was about building friendships.

Leaders of both countries talked together about the gifts they think the other church has to offer. The U.S. church delegation said the Congo churches have vitality in worship, an understanding of generosity and endurance to remain faithful when times are difficult to offer American churches.

Congo leaders said their U.S. counterparts have political influence, experience in leadership training and resources to share.

"Our people can be motivated to be self-sufficient," Mubenga said. "Our problem is how to get there to motivate them."

Throughout the visit, delegation members saw economic generation projects, including rabbit breeding, bread baking, palm oil and grain producing. Congolese leaders said their congregations need to generate sources of income within the church rather than expect help from outside.

"Through your music and prayer, you've nurtured our spirits," said Suzanne Lind, co-country leader for the Congo for MCC and a member of the delegation.

"You had the good will to visit your brothers and sisters, even in the far corners of our region, and that proves you care for us," said Mubenga.

On the road back from Luputa to Mbuji Mayi earlier in the week, the 15-member SUV entourage jumped out of the vehicle to visit a diamond merchant who was a member of one of the CEM congregations. He showed them a handful of small, uncut diamonds worth more than $1,500.

Like these diamonds, leaders agreed, the initial gift-sharing efforts between Congo and U.S. churches are small, but the potential can be very valuable.

Ron Byler is associate executive director of Executive Leadership for Mennonite Church USA and a member of Eighth Street Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.

Eldad's gift

A surprising act of hospitality breaks down stereotypes.

by Stanley W. Green

Warm hospitality often comes out of difficult conditions. We had driven that day from Mukedi, one of the earliest mission stations established by Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission workers. Schools, a hospital and an imposing stone church building had been built there, but we also saw the effects of war, conflict and the ravages of political stability. When we arrived at Lozo, the impoverishing effects of these realities were even more pronounced. The church in which the Mennonites worshiped there had a dirt floor, and the walls were made of poles covered with palm branches. There was nothing meager, however, in the generous welcome our team of five received.

After we arrived, singing children and adults with smiling faces and beautiful songs met us and chaperoned us to our places at the front of the church. I was humbled by the enthusiasm and generosity of these sisters and brothers, who gave up a day in the fields to welcome us. We were further humbled and honored when leaders in the church and community presented formal words of welcome and blessing to our delegation. Songs and lively dances presented by the women's group and the children followed.

We moved then from worship to dialogue. After we brought greetings and introduced ourselves, we responded to questions about the objective of our visit. We were told the church had dug foundations for a new, more adequate sanctuary. The poverty in the community, however, prevented them from moving forward with the project. The evidence of material poverty was as compelling as the signs of spiritual vitality and life. Looking at the children in the front row, I was moved with compassion as I pondered the hardships and struggle in this region, where we were told most people could only afford one meal a day.

Stanley Green

A boy's generosity: Eldad, 11, offered the visitors a gift of money for a cake.

As the questions wound down, and the visit seemed about to end, I wondered what we could do to help these materially poor people. Then a hand went up in the front row, where the children sat. This was unexpected. Even more surprising was what the boy said. He produced a 500 Congolese Franc note and said he wanted to share it with the visitors so that they could buy a cake for themselves to enjoy. In that moment of surprising hospitality by this boy of 11 named Eldad, all my stereotypes broke down. We materially rich Americans were thinking about what we could do to help the situation of the believers at Lozo. Eldad, generous in hospitality, simply acted, trusting the rich providence of God and responding to God's call to welcome the stranger. In that simple gesture, Eldad turned things upside-down. Those burdened by what they could give became humbled recipients of a boy's generosity and God's surprises.

Stanley W. Green is executive director of Mennonite Mission Network.

Seniors and the future of the church

Robert J. Suderman is general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada.

In one Mennonite Church Canada congregation, a teenage girl prefers to attend her grandparents' small, rural and aging congregation rather the congregation of her parents. She has few peers there, and it means driving about an hour rather than going to the big, modern, easily accessible and impressively programmed congregation her parents attend. Why? "The seniors in this congregation love me and encourage me," she says.

Seniors (born before 1946) and the baby-boom generation (born 1946-1964) have an opportunity to shape the possibilities of our church. The spirit displayed by these members will increasingly determine the health and potential of our church.

The demographic trend of Canadian society is similar to the church population. In the next 20 years almost one-third of Canadians will become seniors. In Mennonite Church Canada, 40 to 50 percent of our congregations have a senior demographic bulge (over age 60).

The baby-boom bulge first put pressure on hospital maternity units when the boomers were born. Then they overflowed the public school system, leading to overcrowded classrooms, record construction and double shifts of classes. It gave a huge boost to college enrollment. When the boomers reached child-bearing age, another boom of births fueled the success of the minivan.

The oldest boomers turned 60 in 2006. This is the leading edge of more than 10 million Canadians who will retire in the next 15 years. The need for condominiums, retirement centers and multilevel nursing-care homes is increasing. Labor shortages are becoming evident, and immigration increases to fill the gaps. Pressure on the medical system will increase dramatically. The greatest transfer of financial wealth from one generation to the other in the history of our continent is pending. The largest-ever collection of assets is already accumulating in the hands of women over age 65. This accumulation will escalate in the next 20 years.

Our church has its own bulge. Here are a few implications of the increasing numbers of seniors in our church.

We need to embrace our aging as a gift if our church is to remain active and vibrant. If the presence of seniors is our strength for the future, then we need to affirm and build on that strength.

The spiritual health and encouraging spirit of seniors will increasingly determine the health of our church. Seniors and upcoming seniors need to be aware of the impact their spiritual health (or the lack of it) has on the future of our church.

The financial health of our church will depend on the generosity of seniors. If ministries are to continue, this group will need to be intentional about its commitment to keep the church and its ministries strong. Seniors will not be able to hand off this responsibility to the following generations and expect the same financial power from fewer numbers. Seniors need to model the importance of supporting denominational causes in the midst of personal and congregational decision-making.

Seniors need to nourish a positive spirit in church life. Younger families, young adults, youth and children will come, stay or go depending on the encouraging spirit generated or not generated in the church by this group.

Seniors have the power to resist, block or promote needed change in the church. They need to err on the side of encouragement rather than on critical discouragement. One person told me: "If it's true that the CEO has to sign on to needed change for it to be successful, in our congregation the CEO is the seniors' group. Nothing much can happen here unless they sign on."

Initiatives and energy to assure intergenerational harmony in the church will need to come from the seniors. Whenever there is an imbalance of influence, initiatives for harmony must come from the majority group—in this case the seniors. If they are not proactive they will be perceived as resistant, thus damaging the life of our church.

Seniors should not plan on putting up their feet too soon. The church will continue to need the gifts and active involvement of seniors.

What I have described is already happening in some congregations. In one congregation, the young folks were sensitive to the musical tastes of the older folks and concerned that the drums and guitars not be too loud for them. The older women encouraged the young people and wanted them to be able to praise God in ways that were meaningful to them.

When groups struggle for the well-being and guard the rights of groups other than their own, the spirit of the congregation changes. TM

For a longer version of this article, go to www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/173.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **The resurrection: miracle or myth?**—Clair Hochstetler
- **Is it the time for figs?**—Eleanor Niemela Beachy

Bluffton University mourns seven deaths

'Lights in the darkness' is theme for 2,500 at March 12 memorial service.

We are living through the dark night of the soul, said Bluffton (Ohio) University student senate president Hannah Kehr, but "we watch and wait for the sunrise of hope that is to come."

Darkness and light were the themes of the March 12 memorial service on the Bluffton campus that remembered the lives of seven people killed, when a charter bus carrying the university's baseball team crashed onto Interstate 75 in Atlanta on March 2.

The service began with all but one of the remaining members of the baseball team filing to the front to light seven white candles in remembrance of the deceased.

After a moment of silence and the hymn "Not One Sparrow Is Forgotten," sung by the university's Camerata Singers, Bluffton president James Harder expressed gratitude to the many communities that offered prayer and support to the Bluffton families.

Approximately 2,500 people attended the one-hour service in Founders Hall—with the overflow watching by closed-circuit TV in Burcky Gym—including Ohio state governor Ted Strickland, four members of the Atlanta Fulton County Rescue Squad and officials from AirTran Airways.

Among the 23 media outlets at the memorial was one that broadcast the service live to Atlanta, where one baseball player and a coach remain hospitalized.

"Let us recognize the light in the lives that were lost," said Donald L. Pannabecker, vice president and dean of academic affairs emeritus as he eulogized the seven victims of the crash. "God's use of people—even strangers—were lights in darkness."

Bluffton's campus pastor, Stephen "Tig" Intagliata, used a baseball metaphor to illustrate that death does not have the final say for Christians.

"The game is still in progress—somewhere between the first pitch and the walk-off home run in the bottom of the ninth inning that will send the team home with the thrill of victory."

The service concluded with a litany remembering each of the seven who died. After each remembrance the congregation responded by saying, "Weeping may linger for the night but joy comes with the morning." Bluffton athletics director Phill Talavinia, who led the litany, concluded, "We wait for the morning."

Purple ribbons were worn by those attending the service—and were tied to trees and lamp posts along many streets in the village of Bluffton.

The memorial service was followed by a reception hosted by Taylor University, Upland, Ind., where a large banner was posted for people to write their thoughts and condolences.—*Sarah Roth and Everett Thomas*

Jerome A. Niemeyer and Jean E. Niemeyer
Jerry was the bus driver for the Bluffton University baseball team. The Niemeyers were from Columbus Grove, Ohio. Survivors include two sons, David L. and Gregory T., both of Hilliard; one daughter, Mrs. Jason (Julie A.) Potts, Dublin. The Niemeyers belonged to the St. Anthony Catholic Church, Columbus Grove parish.

Photos and obituary information provided by Bluffton University

Zachary H. Arend
Freshman, born April 30, 1988, the son of Dana L. and Caroline A. (Miller) Arend. He was a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Paulding, Ohio. He was a pitcher for the baseball team and a 2006 graduate of Paulding High School, where he participated in varsity baseball, football and basketball.

David J. Betts
Sophomore, born Dec. 10, 1986, the son of Feroen John and Joy (Ramseyer) Betts of Bryan, Ohio. He was a member of Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio, a member of Bluffton's Science Club, played trombone in the Bluffton University Jazz Band and played intramural basketball.

Scott G. Harmon
Freshman, born Jan. 25, 1988, to Gary A. and Julie M. Graham Harmon, he was a 2006 graduate of Elida High School, where he was a member of the National Honor Society. He played third base for the team. He was a member of New Creation Lutheran Church.

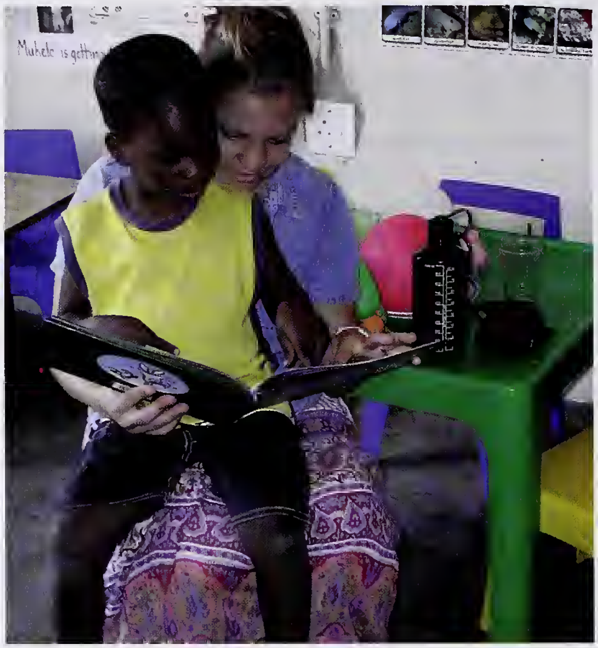
Cody E. Holp
Freshman, 19, is survived by mother and stepfather Kimberly and Bob Askins and father Jeff Holp. A 2006 graduate of Tri-County North High School, he was a business major at Bluffton and participated in Big Brothers & Big Sisters. He was a member of Lewisburg United Methodist Church.

Tyler L. Williams
Sophomore, born June 23, 1987, to Geneva A. Williams. An honor student at Lima Senior High School, Williams majored in business at Bluffton and served as business manager of the school newspaper. A member of New Greater Grace Baptist Church, he was an avid drum player with his own record label, Gimmick Records.

Seminarian's heart still in Swaziland

Hostetter says polygamy part of Swazi culture, contributes to HIV/AIDS

Photo provided



Rene Hostetter reads to a Swazi youngster at Likhaya Lemphilo Lensha (New Life Children's Home).

Rene Hostetter, a second-year student at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va., says that "Swaziland and Harrisonburg are my two homes." But in the same breath, she expresses concern for the future of the African nation.

"Of those who are HIV positive in Swaziland, 80 percent are people under the age of 30," Hostetter told the seminary community in a February chapel service, "If Swaziland continues at this rate, it is predicted it could be the first country to become extinct in the next 50 years."

Hostetter, 26, has spent 13 years of her life in Swaziland. Born in Nigeria to missionary parents, Darrel and Sherill Hostetter, she and her family moved to Swaziland when she was 3 years old. They returned to the United States when Hostetter was 14.

Following graduation from Eastern Mennonite University in 2003, Hostetter returned to Swaziland with Eastern Mennonite Missions to work with those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Hostetter spent the first year of her service term working with AIDS orphans at a project called Likhaya Lemphilo Lensha (New Life Children's Home). She lived with 16 AIDS orphans at the home. She helped teach a preschool and tutor the older children in school.

She spent her second year working with church organizations in training events about HIV/AIDS and information and story gathering from the local congregations.

"I've always had a heart for HIV/AIDS," Hostetter says, "My mom started one of the earliest ministries for HIV/AIDS in Swaziland in the early '90s. She saw the crisis coming. When we left Swaziland in 1994, about 15 percent of the population had HIV/AIDS, but now 42.6 percent of the population is infected."

Swaziland … could be the first country to become extinct in the next 50 years.
—Rene Hostetter

Hostetter's passion for children, women's issues and caring for those who have been emotionally and spiritually wounded made her Swaziland mission assignment a perfect fit.

"Women in Swaziland are often economically dependent on men, so if your husband dies, you may have very few options," says Hostetter.

"Women do not have legal rights like men do in Swazi culture; therefore, women usually do not refuse giving their husbands sex even if they suspect that they have HIV/AIDS. Polygamy is a part of the Swazi culture, so a man having multiple wives or partners is not uncommon," Hostetter says.

"The fact that Swaziland was my home made this assignment harder," she says. "Not only was I grieving what was happening in Swaziland, I was grieving the deterioration of my childhood homeland."

The transition back into U.S. culture also wasn't easy.

"Any missionary coming back—especially from a difficult assignment where there's a lot of suffering—wrestles with the materialistic, comfortable American lifestyle," Hostetter says. "I struggle with how I can be present here while also showing solidarity with my brothers and sisters in Swaziland."

Practicing awareness work, like speaking in the chapel service at EMS, has helped her connect her seminary life, and her life in the United States, with her life in Swaziland.

"Awareness building, intercessory prayer and just staying in contact has helped me reconcile my two lives," Hostetter says. She has done awareness work with children, high schoolers, college students and adults.

"I feel called to walk with young adults, women and children who have been wounded and need healing and wholeness," she says. "I want to learn more about how to be present with other people in suffering."

Hostetter is studying for a master of arts in church leadership degree with a double concentration in spiritual formation and pastoral counseling. She returned to Harrisonburg in December 2005 and entered Eastern Mennonite Seminary in January of 2006.—*Laura Lehman Amstutz of Eastern Mennonite University*

Four interns get sign language training

Settings include state legislature, protest rally, hockey game and hospital

The job of interpreting between American Sign Language and English can take a person into interesting settings. This semester, four Goshen (Ind.) College seniors who are ASL Interpreting majors are fulfilling their required internships at locations around the country and have had opportunities to interpret for a state legislature session, a hockey game and a student rally.

From Jan. 22 to April 6, senior Nick Miller, from Cincinnati is working for the Communication Services for Deaf in Saint Paul, Minn. Miller appeared on the local ABC station's news after interpreting for a student rally petitioning for lower tuition at state universities. He estimated there were 15 speakers and 500-700 students present, along with two other interpreters. Since the temperature was well below freezing, the interpreters split duties into five-minute segments.

"This was my first experience at platform interpreting," said Miller. "The bigger crowd and prominent speakers were intimidating."

Platform interpreting to large crowds requires interpreters to use larger gestures for visibility and sign only the main concepts, Miller says.

Miller also interpreted at a session of the Minnesota House of Representatives.

"I've experienced a lot of ups and downs," Miller says. "I've witnessed a couple listening to their baby's first heartbeat and I've heard a hospitalized woman talk to a nurse about her attempted suicide by overdose."

Alana King, Danville, Ill., and Sarah Lintz, Sylvania, Ohio, work with 14 deaf students and eight staff interpreters at East High School in Anchorage, Alaska, which houses the Alaska State School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

During the week, they either interpret or observe an interpreter in a wide range of settings, including high school and elementary school classes, nurse clinics and a ski trip to the Alyeska ski resort.

"When I told some people that I was doing my internship in Alaska during the winter, they thought I was crazy. They couldn't understand why I would want to come to a place that had five hours of daylight and freezing temperatures," says Lintz.

Mary Roberts, from Dayton, Ohio, is one of two interns at Valley Services for the Deaf in Phoenix, Ariz. Like King and Lintz, she does both observing and actual interpreting, depending on the nature of the assignment.

Roberts calls her internship an "hour-by-hour" endeavor. The organization's Web site posts her assignments for the next day the evening before, although Roberts says, "There is a 50 percent chance that my assignments will change at the last minute."

Photo provided

Goshen College seniors Alana King and Sarah Lintz work with 14 deaf students and eight staff interpreters at East High School, which houses the Alaska State School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Thus far, she has helped interpret classes, job interviews, a cardiologist and a hockey game. The first 15 minutes of every assignment involves getting to know her client and getting accustomed to his or her signing style.

"It's just like speaking," says Roberts. "Someone who is born in the North speaks differently from someone from the South."

Other factors that change signing nuances are whether the parents are deaf or if they attended a school for the deaf, as opposed to public schools.

Roberts enjoys the variety in her internship.

"I haven't had two days like each other, and each new assignment is a challenge," she says. "I really like meeting people and interacting with them. My favorite part of my job is hearing their stories."

There are 31 ASL-English Interpreter majors at Goshen College. Associate professor Myron Yoder, the program director, said that interpreters are guaranteed work right out of college, with initial wages ranging from $20 to $40 per hour.

Although ASL classes have been available at Goshen College for nearly two decades, a four-year degree in American Sign Language Interpreting began in 2002, and the college now offers both a major and minor.

Goshen College is one of only three ASL/English programs in the state of Indiana and it is the only Mennonite college to offer a four-year degree in ASL/English Interpreting.—*Eric Bixler for* The Goshen College Record

I've heard a hospitalized woman talk to a nurse about her attempted suicide by overdose.
—Nick Miller

Two colleges integrate theater efforts

Play about magical village in Scotland creates community for Kansas towns.

Larry Bartel/Hesston College

Tommy Albright (left), played by Bethel College senior Ben Kliewer, and Fiona Maclaren, played by Bethel College junior Chelsea Chaffin, try to decide their future as Tommy's friend Jeff Douglas, played by Bethel College junior Dan Graber listens in a scene from the musical *Brigadoon*, a joint production of Hesston College and Bethel College.

Last summer, the academic deans and communication arts faculty from Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., and Hesston (Kan.) College met to talk about ways they could pool their resources. They noted this: Bethel no longer has a formal theater program. Hesston, which does, currently has no theater.

After a discussion of schedules and potential challenges, faculty from the institutions decided to collaborate on a play.

The result was a joint production of the musical *Brigadoon* by students and faculty from the two colleges. The director was Megan Tyner, professor of theater at Hesston. The choreographer was Margaret Mead-Finizio, instructor of communication arts at Bethel. The musical director was William Eash, professor of music at Bethel.

The musical ran to full houses three nights, March 1-3, in Bethel's Krehbiel Auditorium. There was also a Feb. 28 dress rehearsal open to students, faculty and staff from both colleges.

***Brigadoon*, first produced in 1947** by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe, is the story of a magical village in Scotland that appears for only one day every 100 years—and two American tourists who stumble upon this village just before the celebration of a wedding.

"*Brigadoon* is an enchanting story," says Mead-Finizio. "There is quite a bit of romance involved and … it has a nice balance between acting, dancing and music."

Thematically, the show communicated a message for the actors and crew as well.

"Brigadoon is its own little community that relies on each other for everything," says Tyner. "A sense of community is very important to its inhabitants. That sense of community is something that we stressed in rehearsal."

Tyner and Mead-Finizio cite the creating of that "sense of community" as both a challenge and a joy of the collaboration process.

"Bridging the two communities [of Hesston and Bethel] together to form one was a little bit of a challenge, but it was a lot easier than I had originally presumed," Tyner says. "We made sure that we were communicating everything, so there were no major glitches. Both schools were fully committed to the project."

Rehearsals took place weeknights, alternating between the two campuses every two weeks. The design team, in charge of costumes, lighting and set, consisted of two students from each college.

"It was an interesting dynamic watching the students from these different colleges interact with each other," Mead-Finizio says. "It's been exciting for me to watch this happen."

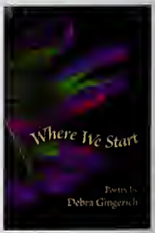
The musical has roles for 24 actors, most of whom must sing and dance. In the four lead roles were Bethel students Chelsea Chaffin, Dan Graber, Ben Kliewer and Hesston student Bethany Miller.—*Adam Gaeddert for Bethel College*

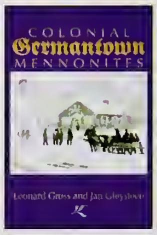
New from Cascadia, copublished Herald Press

Wrestling with the Text
Young Adult Perspectives on Scripture

Wrestling with the Text: Young Adult Perspectives on Scripture, ed. Keith Graber Miller and Malinda Elizabeth Berry. "These young adults do *wrestle* with the biblical text in the context of their own lives. Painful as it may be for some, this is a must-read for church leaders and parents of youth and young adults." —*Richard A. Kauffman.* 192 p; $19.95

Where We Start, Debra Gingerich. "These are restless poems of inquiry, of keen observation, of loss and lament, and of honest probing." —*Jean Janzen.* 90 p; $12.95





Colonial Germantown Mennonites, Leonard Gross and Jan Gleysteen. "Part synthesis of primary and secondary sources, part walking-tour pamphlet, this book can also be read in the context of current discussions of immigration and religious plurality." —*Joyce Munro.* 80 p; $12.95

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Pilot describes serving in Chad, Congo

Hesston College grad flies over runways to clear away goats, other animals.

Steve Bontrager learned to fly at Hesston (Kan.) College. However, his flight training is not the only thing that prepared him for his job far away from his Ohio hometown of Dundee.

"They really pound the professionalism into you," Bontrager said as he spoke on the Hesston campus Jan. 11 to about 30 people interested in his experience as an Air Serv International pilot.

Bontrager learned to be creative and to think in a calm manner—abilities he puts to use frequently as he deals with bureaucratic situations most people twice his age have never had to face. The key for working successfully in a tense cross-cultural situation is to treat both yourself and others with respect, he said.

Bontrager, a 2003 Hesston College graduate, has flown for Air Serv in Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo for 18 months. He started as first officer and was promoted to Captain, flying a Twin Otter. He returned in February as a captain on a King Air 200.

The Twin Otter has 17 seats plus room for cargo. It cruises at 155 mph and has big flotation tires that can land in mud and sand. One runway in the Congo was partly covered with lava from a volcanic eruption; two airstrips are on roads. Others are barely discernible strips of sand. Before landing, he flies low overhead to do a runway inspection and clear the airstrip of goats and other animals. This maneuver also alerts people to the plane's arrival and they line up beside the runway. Flying is visual—something hard to do when a sandstorm drops visibility to one mile or less.

Air Serv International, founded in 1984, provides flights for nongovernmental organizations such as Doctors Without Borders and the United Nations refugee agency. Planes take personnel, food and medicine to people needing emergency aid and transport badly wounded people to hospitals.

In its first 20 years. Air Serv pilots logged 17 million miles on some 160,000 flights. Despite flying into some of the world's hot spots, the organization has a 20-year safety record.

Chad is hot and dry, with average temperatures of 110-120° Fahrenheit. There is not much to do besides hiking, but Air Serv provides air-conditioned housing and satellite TV.

The Congo, on the other hand, is "absolutely beautiful," Bontrager said. "It's a shame it's so war-torn."

Both countries suffer from war. The fighting in Darfur displaced 230,000 Sudanese refugees in Chad. "The fighting is getting worse by the day," Bontrager said.

Armed guards keep would-be thieves and vandals away from the plane when it's on the ground. "The militias know our aircraft," he said, so have never shot an Air Serv plane.

The neutral humanitarian organization's policy is to transport only civilians who are not a part of the government or any of the rebel armies.

Every 6-10 weeks, the pilots get a week's vacation. Bontrager has gone on a safari in Kenya and whitewater rafting on the Nile.

Air Serv prefers to hire pilots who don't have family obligations, due to the remote and sometimes dangerous places they are based. The pilots live in shared housing.—*Susan Balzer for Hesston College*

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Delegation to Iran first in two decades

Mennonite Central Committee helps 13 U.S. leaders meet Ahmadinejad.

Mark Beach

Ron Flaming, MCC's director of international programs, presents a handmade wall hanging to Iranian President Ahmadinejad in Iran. Flaming was part of a delegation of U.S. religious leaders cosponsored by MCC. Helen Dueck, of Ephrata, Pa., made the wall hanging, titled "Hydrangeas."

In a February visit in which U.S. religious leaders were the first American delegation to meet face-to-face with a sitting Iranian president in Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Mennonite Central Committee's Ed Martin saw an unexpected fruit of nearly two decades of MCC work in Iran.

"I would have never dreamed that our work in Iran would lead to such a meeting," Martin says. "Through the relationships built up over the years, to be suddenly sitting in the presidential offices was amazing."

Martin is director of MCC's Central and Southern Asia programs and has overseen the Iran program for 17 years. MCC began working in Iran after a devastating earthquake in 1990. Through years of work on other relief projects, as well as a student exchange program founded in 1997, MCC built networks of ties that led to the February delegation.

The 13-member group of U.S. religious leaders, cosponsored by MCC and American Friends Service Committee, was in Iran Feb. 19-25 and visited U.S. policymakers in Washington, March 6-7.

Delegation members from MCC say they are encouraged by the conversations they had with leaders in Iran, that they will continue work to call U.S. government leaders to meet with Iranian leaders and that they hope U.S. Christians continue to pray for and remember Iran and its people.

Delegation leader Ron Flaming, MCC's director of international programs, says the view Iranians have of their country's history is sharply different from how most Americans view it.

For Iranians, the overthrow of a democratically elected government in 1953 and the installation of the Shah by the U.S. government was a sore point, as was U.S. support for Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s. The delegation met with Iranian leaders who described the Shah as a brutal dictator known for his opulent living. The overthrow of the Shah, from this point of view, was a liberation movement.

Americans, on the other hand, Flaming says, remember the overthrow of the Shah as the hostage crisis, the 444 days that Americans were held hostage. Night after night, television news broadcast images of angry Iranian students and U.S. hostages. More recently, after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, George Bush cast Iran as part of an "axis of evil."

"I think the delegation was keenly aware we sat between these two narratives and found how difficult it was to make the bridge," Flaming says.
—Marla Pierson Lester of Mennonite Central Committee

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CALENDAR

The 50th Anniversary of ***St. Davids Christian Writers' Conference*** will be held June 18-23, at **Grove City College, Grove City, Pennsylvania**. Write to Audrey Stallsmith, registrar, 87 Pines Road East, Hadley, PA 16130, for more information.

An Evening With ASSETS: Celebrating a Decade of Entrepreneurship, **Norristown, Pa.**, Apr. 19. For information and tickets, 610-275-3520 or assetsmontco@bee.net.

April 13 and 14, 2007, ***40th Annual West Coast Mennonite Sale and Auction for World Relief*** at **Fresno Pacific University**, on Chestnut Avenue in Fresno, south of the Butler Avenue intersection. The sale is organized by the West Coast Mennonite Central Committee, headquartered in Reedley. For more information on the sale or MCC, call 559-638-6911 or e-mail westcoast@mcc.org. In Fresno, call 559-453-0522. The sale Web site is westcoastmccsale.org.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Epp, Ava Lynne, Jan. 11, to Brad and Carrie Gerken Epp, York, Neb.

Esch, Elijah Newton, March 2, to Chad and Laura Hull Esch, Harrisonburg, Va.

Friesen, Jadyn Zane, Feb. 15, to Jason and Crystal Nunnenkamp Friesen, Sutton, Neb.

Groff, Elsie Noelle, Dec. 18, 2006, to Loren and Trinda Swartley Groff, Silver Spring, Md.

Kaufman, John Zakai Dengler, Feb. 11, to Josh and Rebecca Dengler Kaufman, Goshen, Ind.

Landis, Aleyah Noelle, Feb. 22, to Jamy and Lisa Ashby Landis, Sutton, Alaska.

Lebow, Ty Michael, Feb. 6, to Ryan and Bobbie Siebert Lebow, Lincoln, Neb.

Lunquist, Nettie Jane Chantry, Feb. 15, to Evrett Lunquist and Ruth Chantry, Lincoln, Neb.

Mast, Adam Paul, Dec. 18, 2006, to Darrell and Lisa Zimmerman Mast, Baltimore.

Miller, Ellie Marie, Feb. 14, to Terry and Juanita Classen Miller, Sarasota, Fla.

Moser, Ethan Connor, Feb. 2, to Bradley and Samanta Arnold Moser, Deer River, N.Y.

Mturi, Lugatiri, Feb. 23, to Kajungu Mturi and Jan Emswiler, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Africa.

Myers, Jacob Russel, Jan. 22, to Keith and Janet Kinsey Myers, Stryker, Ohio.

Nussbaum, Rory James, Feb. 2, to Jason and Kristine Hostetler Nussbaum, Dalton, Ohio.

Piper, Katelyn Anna, March 2, to Mike and Sarah Miller Piper, Harrisonburg, Va.

Reinford, Kaden Lane, Feb. 16, to Kendall and Gail Fox Reinford, Quakertown, Pa.

Roynon, Jessica Marie, Feb. 19, to Brad and Jana Bruckert Roynon, Twin Lakes, Wis.

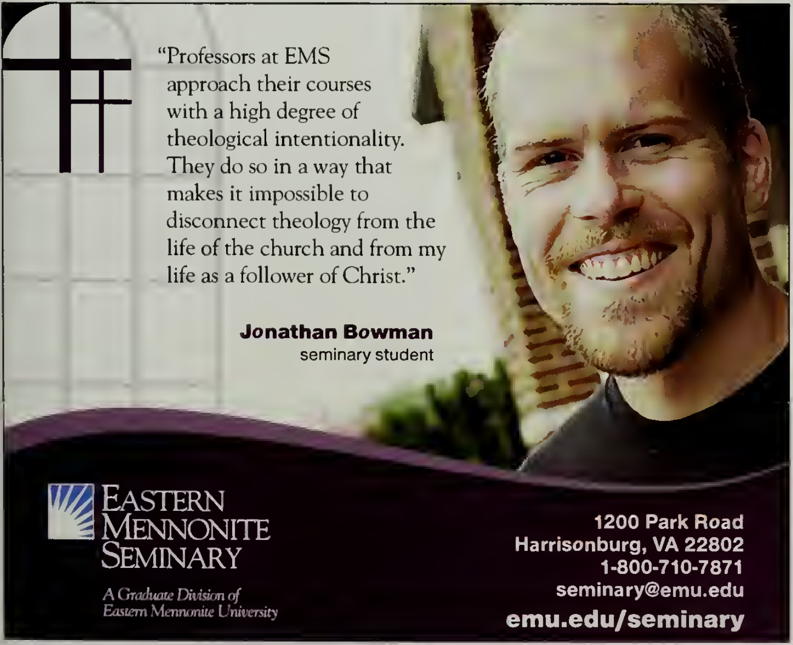
Schmidt, Landon Wesley, Feb. 19. to Wesley and Laura Bergey Schmidt, Bedminster, Pa.

Skelton, Grace Elizabeth, Feb. 21, to Todd and Amy Beachy Skelton, Sherwood, Ore.

Stahl, Joshua Matthew, Feb. 7, to Dr. Jason and Erin Durrie Stahl, Leawood, Kan.

Wall, Abram John, Feb. 5, to John and Karin Kaufman Wall, North Newton, Kan.

Witthoft, Annette Eve, Feb. 17, to Brandon and Lori Miller Witthoft, Wellman, Iowa.


"Professors at EMS approach their courses with a high degree of theological intentionality. They do so in a way that makes it impossible to disconnect theology from the life of the church and from my life as a follower of Christ."

Jonathan Bowman
seminary student

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MARRIAGES

Creque/Johnson: Mark Creque, Streetsboro, Ohio, and Rikki Johnson, Casper, Wyo., Feb. 15, at Aurora Mennonite Church, Aurora, Ohio.

Greaser/Kratz: Tamara Greaser, Telford, Pa., and Jonathan Kratz, Harrisonburg, Va., Feb. 24, at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Paxson/Peters: Jennifer Paxson, Watkinsville, Ga., and Derek Peters, Friend, Neb., Jan. 27, at Briarwood Baptist Church, Watkinsville.

Scott/Wideman: Michael Scott, Waterloo, Ont., and Amy Wideman, St. Jacobs, Ont., March 3, at Jackson's Point, Ont.

DEATHS

Andrews, Charles, 78, Wauseon, Ohio, died Feb. 23. Spouse: Patricia Chittenden Rupp Andrews. Spouse: Barbara Hartsel Andrews (deceased). Parents: Charles, Sr., and Inez Layman Andrews. Children: Timothy Andrews, Ron Rupp, A.J. Rupp, Gary Link, Ed Rupp, Joyce Nafziger, Nancy Becker, Dave Link, Julie Gugel; 27 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 28 at North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon.

Detweiler, Grace Souder, 88, Sellersville, Pa., died Feb. 13. Spouse: Paul F. Souder. Parents: Elmer and Addie Detweiler. Children: P. Don, Grace Marie Gerber, Feryl K.; eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17 at Rockhill Mennonite Community Church, Sellersville.

Dick, Elizabeth Epp, 93, Mountain Lake, Minn., died Feb. 20. Spouse: Bernhard "Ben" P. Dick (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Anna Ewert Epp. Children: Kathleen Martens, Charles, Richard; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 24 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Epp, Katherine Hiebner, 94, Henderson, Neb., died Feb. 2. Spouse: Herman J. Epp (deceased). Parents: Gerhard Hiebner and Aganatha Friesen Epp. Children: Myron, Elvera Epp, Shirley Ries; 14 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 7 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Fellenbaum, Robert H., 88, Lancaster, Pa., died Feb. 20. Spouse: Miriam P. Keagy Fellenbaum (deceased). Parents: Clyde and Edna Hilton Fellenbaum. Children: Robert E., Donald H., L. Kenneth, Patricia Daveler; 11 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 24 at Masonville Mennonite Church, Washington Boro, Pa.

Gerber, Esther Taylor, 85, Orrville, Ohio, died Feb. 20. Spouse: Orris Gerber. Parents: Joseph and Wilda Miller Taylor. Children: Carol Martin, Charlene Schildt, Cheryl Kaufman; nine grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 24 at Martins Mennonite Church, Orrville.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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•fax 574-535-6050

•1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794

Good, Miriam Hertzler, 84, Harrisonburg, Va., died Feb. 19. Spouse: James D. Good. Parents: Henry and Annie Harbold Hertzler. Children: Barbara Knupp, Ray, Nelson; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 22 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Janzen, Gary, 54, Henderson, Neb., died Feb. 20. Spouse: Pam Friesen Janzen. Parents: Walter and Elva Siebert Janzen. Children: Kevin, Carissa Nietfeldt, Carlee; one grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 23 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Kroeker, Verna Quiring, 85, Henderson, Neb., died Jan. 1. Spouse: Norman Kroeker (deceased). Parents: Peter J. and Helena Dalke Quiring. Children: Elaine Schroeder, Gladys Christopherson, Glen, Doris House, Don, Max; six grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 11 at Henderson Care Center Chapel.

Penner, Bertha Elsie Jantzen, 90, Beatrice, Neb., died Feb. 15 of pulmonary complications. Spouse: Alfred T. Penner (deceased). Parents: Alexander and Helen Entz Jantzen. Children: Marvin James, Harold Allen "H.A.," Milbert LaVern, Alfred Timothy; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 20 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Regehr, Norman "Butch," 72, Inman, Kan., died Feb. 15 of cancer. Spouse: Dorothy Rose Regehr. Parents: Aaron D. and Esther Fehdrau Regehr. Children: Kevin L., Kristy R. Gaither, Steve Smith, David Rose, Robin Bryan, Julie Wimmer; three grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at Inman Mennonite Church.

Roth, Orval D., 86, Wayland, Iowa, died Feb. 14. Spouse: Evelyn Rugaber Roth. Parents: P.J. and Lydia Orendors Roth. Children: Kenneth, Shirley Wandling; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17 at Wayland Mennonite Church.

Short, Elden, 90, Wauseon, Ohio, died Feb. 19. Spouse: Erma Holsopple Short (deceased). Parents: Andrew and Mary Miller Short. Children: Leon, Richard, Robert, James, Eugene, Darlene Ramon; 14 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 23 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon.

Slabaugh, Carolyn June Campbell, 67, Dayton, Va., died Jan. 24. Spouse: Marvin T. Slabaugh. Parents: Lester B. and Naomi Heatwole Campbell. Children: Kenton, Gregory, Cheryl Long; four grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 28 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Slabaugh, Levi N., 78, Wakarusa, Ind., died Feb. 24. Spouse: Esta Marie Hoschstetler Slabaugh (deceased). Parents: Neal and Fannie Hochstetler Slabaugh. Children: Randall G., Barry E., Robin L., Bruce E., Cynthia G. Dixon, Corinne J. Burkhart; 18 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 5 at North Main Street Mennonite Church, Nappanee, Ind.

Smucker, Lynn M., 67, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 14. Spouse: Dorothy "Dot" Springer Smucker. Parents: Paul and Ella Pearl Smucker. Children: Bruce, Todd, Marissa Smucker, Jacqui Bostic; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Springer, Irene A. Litwiller, 76, Minier, Ill., died Feb. 23. Spouse: Elmo Springer. Parents: Joseph and Alma Good Litwiller. Children: Jeff, Tom, Mitch, Sue Turskey, Marge Gingerich; 17 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 27 at Hopedale Mennonite Church, Hopedale, Ill.

Thompson, Laura S. Sweigart, 98, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 2. Spouse: Lester Thompson (deceased). Parents: Jacob R. and Anna Shirk Sweigart. Children: Virgil E., Daniel J.; 12 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Hartzler-Gutermuth-Inman Funeral Home, Elkhart, Ind.

Waltner, Johnny Henry, 90, Freeman, S.D., died March 3. Spouse: Mabel Fliginger Waltner. Parents: Henry Jos and Anna Waltner. Children: Shirley Preheim, Loren, Roger, Rodney; seven grandchildren. Funeral: March 5 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

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Associate pastor(s) sought by **Covenant Community Fellowship**, www.cc-fellowship.org, a Mennonite congregation of 175 founded in 1986 and located in Lansdale, Pa., 20 miles northwest of Philadelphia. Leadership responsibilities would include equipping/empowering volunteer lay directors with a primary focus on youth/young adults and secondary focus on children's ministries and contemporary worship/music. This full-time equivalent position(s) may be filled by one or more people. For more information, please contact dennisgehman@comcast.net.

Eastern Mennonite University announces ***full-time and part-time faculty positions in nursing*** beginning fall 2007. A minimum of MSN in nursing is required. Responsibilities include student advising, classroom teaching (includes adult health, critical care or leadership) and learning laboratory teaching. Opportunities for supervising clinical experiences are available in leadership and in adult health in the hospital or in family and community settings. Broader university involvement available. Send letter of application, curriculum vita (resumé), graduate transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and names of three references to Dr. Marie S. Morris, cice president and undergraduate academic dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802. http://www.emu.edu. Review begins immediately. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. Applications will be acknowledged by letter. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity.

100th anniversary. **Lititz Mennonite Church**, 165 Front Street, Lititz, PA 17543. Sat. p.m. to Sun. p.m. April 21-22. Saturday—self-guided walking tour. Lititz area history bus tour. Evening release of congregational history, author Alice W. Lapp. Sun. a.m. corporate remembering. Sermon by John L. Ruth. Lunch early afternoon hymn sing using the five hymnbooks 1907-2007. All welcome. Call 717-626-8237 or email lmc165@yahoo.com for details.

Bluffton University invites applications for the following one-year full-time faculty positions to begin fall 2007.

History—Early modern and modern European. Doctorate preferred; ABD considered. The successful candidate must have the capacity to teach the two humanities survey courses (to and from 1500) in the general education curriculum. Ability to teach the European political tradition highly desirable.

Chemistry. PhD preferred; master's degree considered. The anticipated course load includes two courses per semester. The primary course responsibility involves a two-semester first-year general inorganic chemistry course (at the 100 level). General inorganic chemistry includes four lectures per week with multiple sections of weekly three-hour labs. Additional majors' courses could include a two-semester-hour advanced inorganic chemistry course in the fall term and a four-hour analytical chemistry course in the spring term. The successful applicant will conduct all lectures; setup, monitor and grade the labs for these courses and hold regular office hours.

Review of applications for these positions begins immediately and continues until an appointment is made. Compensation is commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. Send letter of interest, curriculum vita or resumé, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee or if necessary from placement office) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Academic Affairs, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. See www.bluffton.edu. Bluffton University welcomes applications from all academically qualified people who respect the Anabaptist/Mennonite peace church tradition and endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Bethany Christian Schools in Goshen (gr. 6-12; enrollment 285) invites applications for the full-time administrative position (11 months) of ***advancement director*** to begin in July 2007. Bachelor's degree required. Preference will be given to candidates with relevant experience, such as nonprofit fund-raising and marketing. To apply, submit a resumé and letter of application to principal Allan Dueck, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526 or akdueck@bethanycs.net.

Michigan State University Mennonite Fellowship is seeking a ***half-time pastor***. MSUMF is committed to the Anabaptist-Mennonite theology and desires a pastor who will bring weekly meditations, participate in worship planning, nurture all age groups in their spiritual growth and share our vision for local and global outreach and service. MSUMF is affiliated with the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference and Central District Conference. For more information please contact Nancy Kaufmann, nancy@im.mennonite.net

Medical director, physician for progressive faith-based, nonprofit CARF-CCRC accredited institution in south-central Pennsylvania. Full-time position. 1,100 residents including 233 long-term-care beds and 200 assisted-living residents. Work with another full-time MD and full-time PA-C. Leadership and interpersonal skills important. Practice includes out-patient office with goal to offer range of geriatric services to our broader community. Fax resumé/inquiries to John N. Benner, MD at 717-261-4191 or email to bennerj@mennohaven.org.

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To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.

Executive director for **No Longer Alone Ministries**, Lancaster, Pa. NLAM provides psych rehab and supportive services to over 200 people affected by significant mental illness, through support groups, supported living and compeer programs. Email resumés to Clair H. Sauder at chsauder@comcast.net.

The department of nursing at **Goshen College** seeks applicants or nominations for a ***full -ime professor in family nurse practitioner program and medical-surgical nursing***. Faculty responsibilities will begin in fall semester of 2007. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Bluffton University (Ohio) seeks applicants for the position of ***admissions counselor***. This position has primary responsibility for recruiting students from specific states outside Ohio. It requires regular travel, weekend and evening hours, and communication with prospective students and families. The candidate will be able to articulate the benefits of a Christian, liberal arts, residential university setting. A bachelor's degree is required. In addition, a strong background in the Mennonite/Anabaptist peace church tradition is desired. Additional information about this position and the search process is available at http://www.bluffton.edu/about/employment.

Lake Center Christian School (K-12), 620 students in Hartville, Ohio (Akron/Canton area), is accepting applications for the following position: ***full-time director of development***. This person will lead the development department in all areas of public relations, fund-raising and donor development/relations. LCCS is owned/operated by Cornerstone, Hartville and Maple Grove Mennonite churches. For further information, please contact Matt McMullen, Superintendent, phone 330-877-2049, fax 330-877-2040, email lccsmmcmullen@yahoo.com.

Editor needed: **OurFaith**, a Mennonite/Anabaptist digest and Web site that provides selected articles, news and photos to Mennonite congregations across the United States, is seeking a part-time editor. Responsibilities: manage overall development and production of OurFaith Digest three issues per year (50,000 copies per issue); maintain the OurFaith Web site (www.ourfaithdigest.org); manage general operations (finances, staff) and represent/promote OurFaith to the larger Mennonite/Anabaptist church. Qualifications: mature Christian and respected member of a Mennonite/Anabaptist congregation; strong commitment to Jesus Christ and biblical truth as understood by the Mennonite/Anabaptist Christian tradition; strong interpersonal, communication, editorial, business management skills; general understanding of computer systems and software applications, bachelor degree preferred. Apply: send resumé to Paul M. Schrock, 525 Spring Oaks Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22801 or pjschrock@adelphia.net

Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich., is seeking someone for ***maintenance assistant*** (start date as early as April 2007): Full-time salaried position including housing, insurance and meals. (Potential for short-term voluntary service as well.) Experience with basic maintenance, minor repairs and operating machinery is needed. Contact Justin Weaver (justin@friedenswald.org or 269-476-9744) if interested.

Mennonite Manor, a 250-resident retirement community in South Hutchinson, Kan., seeks a ***CEO*** with strong financial acumen, deep operational experience and a commitment to staff development and older adults. Minimum candidate requirements are: bachelor's degree, five years senior management experience in the health/human service or education sectors and board experience. Send inquiries to: Caryn Howell, MHS Alliance, 234 S. Main St., Suite I, Goshen, IN 46526, fax 574-534-3254 or email carynhowell@msn.com.

Older Adults Living with Spirit

Mennonite Association of Retired Persons is seeking new members to become part of the growing community of older adults wanting to remain connected and vital. MARP members currently number over 4,000 from 40+ states! The current MARP board members hail from Ohio, Kansas, Michigan, Illinois, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

meaningful service

MARP membership supports the short-term service project dubbed "SOOP" which encourages retired folks to "benefit others." There are over 60 locations from which to choose, including some for the "RV'ers."

a place to belong

Join MARP today and enjoy all the benefits including reduced fees at MARP-sponsored events, a discount on long-term care insurance (for LIFE memberships only), regular updates on service sites, a quarterly newsletter, and more.

RATES	LIFE	3 Years	1 Year
One Person	$300	$40	$20
Two Persons (at one address)	$400	$60	$30

MARP promises to donate to MCC ten percent of new membership fees received through April 2007.

Mennonite Association of Retired Persons

Helen L. Lapp, Executive Director; 771 Route 113, Souderton, PA 18964
(215/866) 721-7730 ~ marp-soop@juno.com ~ http://marp.mennonite.net

Lititz Area Mennonite School, a K-8 Christian school in Lititz, Pa., serving 305 students, is looking for a ***head administrator*** for the 2007-08 school year. The position requires great organizational and managerial skill as well as academic knowledge and a vision for educational excellence. Candidate must have a passion for Christian education and excellent communication and relational skills. Leadership in Christian school administration is a plus. Bachelor's degree in school administration or education required, preferably a master's degree. Send inquiry or resumé to: Matt Burkholder, Search Committee Coordinator, Lititz Area Mennonite School, 1050 East Newport Road, Lititz, PA 17543; 717-626-9551, email lamsoff@dejazzd.com.

Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, B.C., is seeking a ***full-time associate pastor of youth and young adults***. This person will serve in a leadership team under the direction of the lead pastor. Although the primary responsibility will be to work with the youth and the youth leaders, an interest in providing leadership for the young adult small group would be considered a definite asset. The successful candidate will have a theological education, will agree with our church's vision statement and statement of faith and will have a passion for youth ministry. Starting date: July 2007; application deadline: March 31, 2007. Interested people are invited to visit our Web site for a complete job description and to submit a cover letter and resumé to: Youth Pastor Search Committee, Peace Mennonite Church, 11571 Daniels Road, Richmond, BC V6X 1M7; Phone: 604-278-0111; email office@peacemennonite.ca; Web site: www.peacemennonite.ca.

English conversation teachers needed. **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

Sunnyside Village, a 400-resident Mennonite affiliated retirement community in Sarasota, Fla., seeks a ***CEO*** with strong financial acumen, deep operational experience and a commitment to staff development and older adults. Minimum candidate requirements are: bachelor's degree, five years senior management experience in the health/human service or education sectors and board experience. Send inquiries to: Caryn Howell, MHS Alliance, 234 S. Main St., Suite I, Goshen, IN 46526, fax 574-534-3254 or email carynhowell@msn.com.

Sunshine Inc., a Mennonite-affiliated provider of services to people with disabilities, seeks a new ***executive director***. Located in Maumee, Ohio, the organization serves over 1,000 people annually with a range of services, including residential care, group homes, supportive living, respite care and vocational services. Minimum candidate requirements are: bachelor's degree, five years senior management experience in the health/human service or education sectors and board experience. Send inquiries to: Kirk Stiffney, MHS Alliance, 234 S. Main St., Suite I, Goshen, IN 46526, fax: 574-534-3254 or email: kirkstiffney@msn.com.

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'Jack Bauer is a criminal'

Gordon Houser

The popular and Emmy-winning counterterrorism drama series "24" is in its sixth season. Its white-knuckle suspense makes it appealing to watch, but what values does it promote? And does it affect the broader political arena?

Each season of "24" depicts a day (each episode one hour of that day) in which the United States faces a major terrorist threat. Jack Bauer, a heroic C.T.U. (a fictional Counter Terrorism Unit) agent, must solve the complicated conspiracy each season presents and overcome the perpetrators. The terrorists are poised to use nuclear bombs or bioweapons or in some way destroy thousands of lives.

Each season presents the dilemma of what to do when faced with an imminent threat: A resistant suspect has information that may save many lives, and he may either be given due process or tortured. Bauer chooses torture, and it almost always works. Herein lies two of the main problems with "24"—it is unrealistic and unethical.

Perhaps a TV show should not be called unethical. After all, it's just a show. And many shows are unrealistic. The problem arises when you track the effect of the show.

Jane Mayer points out in her article "Whatever It Takes" (*The New Yorker*, Feb. 19 & 26) that U.S. military and F.B.I. interrogators say that "the show's central political premise—that the letter of American law must be sacrificed for the country's security—was having a toxic effect" and "had adversely affected the training and performance of real American soldiers."

Mayer quotes Gary Solis, a retired law professor who designed and taught the Law of War for Commanders curriculum at West Point as saying that under both U.S. and international law, "Jack Bauer is a criminal. In real life, he would be prosecuted." Yet many of Solis' students—and many soldiers and many viewers—say, "Whatever it takes."

According to most terrorism experts, the "ticking time bomb" situation almost never occurs. Joe Navarro, one of the F.B.I.'s top experts in questioning techniques, says in reference to Bauer's calm demeanor after torturing someone: "Only a psychopath can torture and be unaffected. You don't want people like that in your organization. They are untrustworthy and tend to have grotesque other problems." Navarro, who has conducted some 12,000 interrogations, says that "torture was not an effective response."

"The notion that physical coercion in interrogations is unreliable," writes Mayer, "although widespread among military intelligence officers and F.B.I. agents, has been firmly rejected by the Bush Administration."

Tony Lagouranis, a former Army interrogator in the war in Iraq, says that DVDs of "24" circulate widely among the soldiers there, and he knows of instances in which interrogators copied a technique they saw on the show. However, he says, "In Iraq, I never saw pain produce intelligence."

Lagouranis says that the U.S. military and the F.B.I. teach real intelligence professionals to use "rapport-building," the slow process of winning over informants, which is the method that generally works best.

Despite the testimony of these experts to the team that creates "24," it is doubtful the show will make many changes because of it. It makes a lot of money for Fox, and Joel Surnow, the show's co-creator and executive producer, is a self-proclaimed conservative who also wants to make a show that presents Senator Joseph McCarthy in a positive light.

We, at least, can learn to be more discerning viewers and not accept what TV reveals to us as real or necessary. Watch how you watch.

FILMS

Amazing Grace (PG) tells the inspiring story of William Wilberforce, an 18th-century member of the British Parliament who worked tirelessly to outlaw slavery. While William struggles with sickness, the main drama is getting the law passed, which takes many years. While the acting and cinematography are fine, the main character is portrayed too one dimensionally, thus hindering the realism of grace.

DVDS

The Ground Truth shows that the chief purpose of the military is to train soldiers to kill without qualms. But the qualms come. This hard-hitting documentary uses interviews and stark footage from the war in Iraq to reveal the post-traumatic stress syndrome of many soldiers who return, some with horrible physical wounds as well.

Leap of Faith: CO Smokejumpers During World War II is a short documentary with interviews and old footage of CPS workers in the 1940s. Curiously it says almost nothing about why these men became COs. Instead they seem driven to prove they're just as courageous as the soldiers at war.

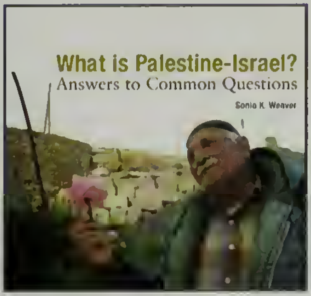
BOOKS

Searching for Sacred Ground: The Journey of Chief Lawrence Hart, Mennonite by Raylene Hinz-Penner (Cascadia and Herald Press, 2007, $19.95) tells the story of a remarkable man and of the two peoples who formed him. Hinz-Penner deftly combines her personal reflections with biography and history to show the tension and beauty of the Cheyenne-Arapaho people and Mennonite faith and how both live out peace.

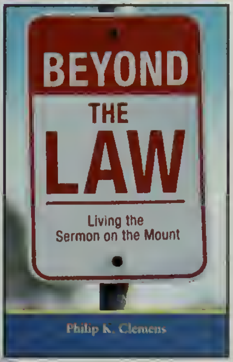
SailingActs: Following an Ancient Voyage by Linford Stutzman (Good Books, 2006, $14.95) recounts the experiences of Stutzman and Janet, his wife, as they follow the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul. The ideal reader will love sailing and Paul. While he includes many insights into Paul's experience as recorded in Acts, I wanted more—and less about sailing.

The Gospel According to the Beatles by Steve Turner (Westminster John Knox Press, 2006, $19.95) is a must-read for Beatles fans, but it also offers insight into pop culture as it developed in the 1960s. Turner, a veteran writer, covers everything about the Beatles' varied beliefs.

Herald Press: God Living Among Us



What is Palestine-Israel? **Answers to Common Questions**
Commissioned by Mennonite Central Committee
Sonia K. Weaver presents some of the questions Mennonite workers in Palestine regularly receive from supporters in Canada, the United States, and beyond, along with straightforward answers. While the book grew out of the experience of MCC, it also pays attention to the work of other Mennonite mission and peacebuilding agencies in the country.
Paper, 80 pages, $9.99



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Mutual aid needs deacons

Everett J. Thomas

Serving with the bishop and the preacher was the deacon … whose special responsibility it was to be a minister to the poor [in the church].—from *A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership*

Traditional patterns of mutual aid among Mennonites have been weakening for decades. But several ideas are emerging that may generate new expressions of mutual aid along with a recovery of our deacon tradition (see quote above).

Mennonite victims in "Katrina Land" held an extended discussion with Mennonite Church USA leaders in January. The experience of Gulf States Mennonite Conference members revealed a need for some new means for Mennonites to aid other Mennonites (see box below).

"We are going to need to learn how to better channel mutual aid money to other members of the church," Mennonite Church USA's executive director Jim Schrag said in response.

A second idea for mutual aid comes from Mennonite World Conference. Last month, MWC leaders announced the creation of a "koinonia delegation" to Zimbabwe, the southern Africa country whose situation continues to deteriorate—and brings our sisters and brothers there more hardships every day (see "Global Anabaptist Diaconate Planned," Feb. 20).

Larry Miller, Mennonite World Conference's general secretary, says that while Mennonite service agencies respond generously to world disasters, too little attention is directed specifically toward members of the global Anabaptist family. Consequently, MWC leaders are proposing a Global Anabaptist Deacon Commission that would have three roles:

- be alert to needs within the global Anabaptist family,
- call the global church to prayer,
- organize a response.

But taking care of our own gets tricky.

There are many material and financial needs among our sisters and brothers in the global South. Someone needs to decide which parts of the church should receive help and which parts should not. For example, a Mennonite Church USA delegation just returned from a visit with Congolese Mennonites—the subject of this issue (pages 8-17). These Mennonites also have crushing needs. How do we discern our responses?

This is where the role of deacon can help. This person or team must have great integrity so that the church accepts the call to help the poor elsewhere in the church. This integrity can also mitigate against patterns of paternalism between those who "have" and those who "have not."

"Deacons … must be serious," Paul writes in 1 Timothy, "not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them first be tested; then if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons."

The poor and hurting within our church need attention. Finding ways to respond with integrity to their needs will strengthen our mutual aid, and it will strengthen the church. New forms of mutual aid—managed through the ancient deacon tradition—can help us serve the impoverished in our church even as we continue to offer relief and comfort to those outside the church.—*ejt*

While Mennonite service agencies respond generously to world disasters, too little attention is directed specifically toward members of the global Anabaptist family.
—Larry Miller

Setting the record straight

Gulf States Mennonite Conference leaders told Executive Board members on Jan. 21 that some $10 million was contributed through Mennonite Disaster Service to help non-Mennonite victims of Hurricane Katrina, while only $189,000 was contributed to help members of Gulf States Mennonite Conference ("Mennonite Church USA Executive Board Meets in Mississippi to Show Solidarity," Jan. 20). However, those numbers are incorrect.

Duane Maust, moderator for Gulf States Mennonite Conference, said on March 8 that approximately $6 million was given to Mennonite Disaster Service and $2.2 million to Mennonite Central Committee for responses to hurricanes Katrina and Rita. According to Maust, Mennonite Disaster Service spent well over $189,000 in the region, including repairing some damaged Mennonite church buildings and some Mennonites' homes affected by the hurricanes. The $189,000 amount is the total given from a variety of Mennonite sources to Gulf States Mennonite Conference's Katrina Fund.—*ejt*

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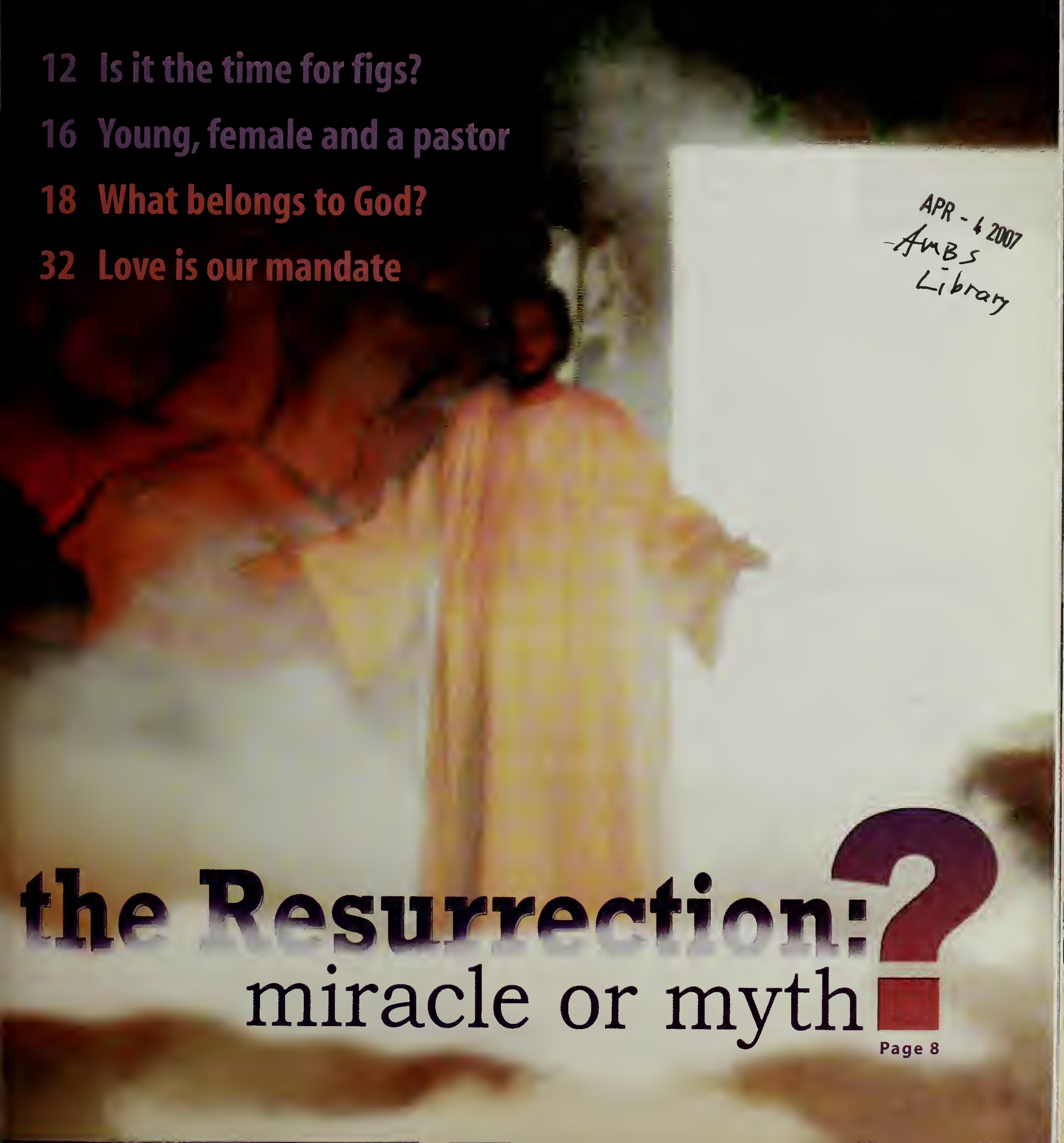

the Resurrection: miracle or myth?

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We assume too much

Anne Stuckey is associate pastor at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio.

The terminal door opened and people filed off a plane just arrived from Florida. In flip-flops, T-shirts and shorts, they didn't really fit in Detroit in January. I shook my head, wondering if they did not know we had snow, ice and freezing temperatures here this week? Did they think that since it was sunny and warm in the place where they had just come from that the place they were going to would be the same? Most of us know there is no plane large enough to transport enough sun and palm trees to change Detroit in the fullness of winter. Yet these people seemed to be trying to bring Florida with them. Perhaps they were just hoping they could extend the warmth they knew just a bit longer by wearing their shorts. To onlookers, they seemed naïve and looked rather silly. As a gentleman in a straw hat walked by me, the chill of the open door reached my seat, and I pulled my coat tighter.

A few days later, I left my home in Michigan to drive 43 miles to the church I serve in Ohio. We had an ice storm the night before, and all the trees were gilded with what looked like a half inch of glass now covered with a touch of snow. The sight was breathtaking, and I worried the meeting I planned to attend would not be held due to poor road conditions. But as I drove, I soon noticed no new dusting of snow on the pine trees. Farther along the road, the glitter of ice also disappeared. Here the pavement was wet but not dangerous. I had assumed the snow and ice I experienced at home would be the same down here. But that was not proving to be true.

How easy it is to believe that my individual reality must be the same for everyone else, too. The way I reacted to cancer treatment is surely the way you will react, too. If I use certain herbal supplements to ease a cold, then they will undoubtedly work for you, too. If I believe a certain political candidate is the best Christian, then I'm sure you will agree with me. What I believe on certain theological issues has to be right, therefore no doubt you believe exactly the same way I do. I know why there is a health-care crisis in the United States, thanks to my medical husband, and why global warming is such a threat.

My arrogance can be staggering at times.

However, the truth of life is likely closer to what the preacher wrote to his son in Marilynne Robinson's novel *Gilead* (Picador, 2006): "You can know a thing to death and be for all purposes completely ignorant of it. A man can know his father, or his son, and there might be nothing between them but loyalty, love and incomprehension."

The truth is, I don't know what the road conditions are going to be like 20 miles away, and I don't know what your life with depression is like. I don't know what it is like to live in Washington or Guatemala. Another preacher wrote in Ecclesiastes: "Guard your steps when you go to the house of God; to draw near to listen is better than the sacrifice offered by fools; for they do not know how to keep from doing evil. Never be rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be quick to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you upon earth; therefore let your words be few" (Ecclesiastes 5:1,2).

It is only in arrogance that we think we are the ones who speak the only truth. God is still in heaven, and we are on the earth and don't know it all. Neither will we ever know all as long as we are here in this world. So may we be tolerant and kind to others, because we don't know their reality. And assuming we do just keeps us doing evil, which is exactly what the preacher warned us about. TM

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

God calls women to share their gifts

One of the five guiding principles of Mennonite Women USA's mission statement is to encourage women to "utilize their gifts." We are saddened by the recent Lancaster (Pa.) Conference vote to not ordain women but recognize and appreciate the work done by many to bring this to a vote. While Mennonite Women USA honors the various approaches women take to interpreting Scripture regarding gender roles, we also want to help ensure that Mennonite women can share their gifts fully as each is called by Christ.

We affirm that women are called by God to share their gifts with the church and the world, without restriction due to gender. This is supported by the Mennonite Church USA confession of faith, which says: "The church calls, trains and appoints gifted men and women to a variety of leadership ministries on its behalf. These may include such offices as pastor, deacon and elder as well as evangelists, missionaries, teachers, conference ministers and overseers."—*Mennonite Women USA board and staff members: Rebecca Sommers, Goshen, Ind.; Gail Harder, Reedley, Calif.; Jean Kilheffer Hess, East Petersburg, Pa.; Gail Shetler, Goshen, Ind.; Patricia Burdette, Butler, Ohio; Cora L. Brown, Elkhart, Ind.; Vilma Padilla, Goshen, Ind.; Anne Hege, Aberdeen, Idaho; Barb Voth, Newton, Kan.; Regina Shands Stoltzfus, Elkhart, Ind.; Evelyn Hertzler, Harrisonburg, Va.; Berni Kaufman, Moundridge, Kan.; Lois Loflin, Hutchinson, Kan.; Laurie Oswald Robinson, Newton, Kan.; Rhoda Keener, Shippensburg, Pa.*

Truth is wrapped up in people

I appreciated very much the "people" articles in the March 6 issue featuring Luis Padilla, Fred Schmidt, Yorifumi Yaguchi and Walter Yoder. Perhaps the best way to convey truth is to wrap it in people. My husband was also glad to hear about the fuel-saving "nonference" ("Group Plans 'Nonference' to Save Fuel")—*Elaine Sommers Rich, Bluffton, Ohio*

Appreciated Walter E. Yoder article

Thank you for publishing stories of Mennonites in the March 6 issue. While all were interesting, it was Dwight Weldy's tribute to Walter E. Yoder that especially got my attention. During the 1940s at Goshen (Ind.) College as a student and a staff member, I attended chapel services four days a week. Yoder was usually the song leader, and I experienced that "he did not need words to explain what he wanted us to do and how to sing. We simply caught his feelings for songs," as Weldy said. We learned the words of hymns by repeatedly singing them so that when "Prof" announced, "Number 32" (*Church Hymnal*), we knew it was "Eternal Father" and sang without opening the book. I would love to get together with others who sang with Walter Yoder for a hymn sing from the black *Church Hymnal* to sing numbers 11, 30, 32, 42, 45, 275, 291, to mention only a few.—*Miriam Charles, Goshen, Ind.*

I'm sure I am not the only mature reader who fondly remembers "chorister" Walter E. Yoder as an almost mystic figure who oft-times could be spied on the Goshen College campus in the dawning years of my adulthood ("The Song Leader," March 6). And it is fitting that his encomium be written by Dwight Weldy. It was with delight, even fascination, that as a lad I entered the sanctuary of my father's Ontario congregation whenever the choruses (not "choirs") led by Dwight Weldy from Goshen College—that Mennonite musical mecca—came to sing. Any conductor who could elicit such heavenly music from a collection of choristers must have been a director worth more than just his pitch pipe. In the early 1960s I attended Goshen College. To sing under professor Weldy, to listen to his voice in song, to feel his heart coming through his smiles and waving arms—ah, that was a pleasure compounded by musical memory and happy harmony. Weldy was a worthy successor to Professor Yoder.—*Robert Koch, Colorado Springs, Colo.*

Thanks so much for Dwight Weldy's article on song leader and Goshen College professor Walter Yoder. Dwight's living memory takes us back as far as 1935 and makes the gestures of Yoder's directing, his good-humored leadership, his emphasis on the blending of voices and the music

IN THIS ISSUE

This Easter issue features an article by Clair Hochstetler in which he examines the claims made by people who want to prove that Jesus did not rise from the dead (page 8). Hochstetler calls us to "emphasize that the Resurrection of Christ is not just an Easter-time phenomenon ... his resurrection continues to transform lives today." But we also include in this issue articles that focus on other parts of this time in the church calendar. Eleanor Niemala Beachy uses the Palm Sunday text to describe what time it is (page 12). John Rempel offers a Good Friday reflection drawn not from the usual Gospels of Matthew, Mark or Luke (page 14). Instead, Rempel focuses on the Gospel of John and says, "John wrote a unique account ... so the church will never forget that Jesus' derision is at the same time his glorification."—*Editor* that was produced seem inspiring all over again. I feel as if I can hear the notes ringing around the room.—*Mark Schlotterbeck, Philadelphia*

Yaguchi available online

Thank you for the article on Yorifumi Yaguchi in the March 6 issue ("Poet of Peace"). Those interested in his work can find my translation of his book *Iesu* (*Jesus*) online at http://rossbender.org/-jesus1.html. This collection of poems, with illustrations by Georgia Liechty, was published in 1989 by Pinchpenny Press and is now out of print. Some of the poems were included in the recent collection edited by Wilbur J. Birky. The site also includes a link to Wilbur Birky's *Mennonite Quarterly Review* article on Yaguchi and a 2005 recording of the poet reading "God of War." (http://rossbender.org/yaguchi1.html)—*Ross L. Bender, Philadelphia*

Christian Peace Witness sobering, inspiring

I just returned from the Christian Peace Witness held in Washington on March 16 (see "Mennonites Attend Antiwar Peace Vigil," page 19). After a sobering yet inspiring worship service at the National Cathedral, several thousand Christians processed together the 3.4 miles to Lafayette Park across from the White House, singing and chatting along the way.

I was proud to be an American as I participated, remembering that in many countries there might have been massive violence unleashed against peaceful protest and the civil disobedience that followed. I was also sad to be an American as I remembered again, with many others, the tragic cost of this war for both Americans and Iraqis and the loss of soul we have experienced in the process. I was proud to be a Mennonite Christian as I saw Leo Hartshorn and Ron Byler participate in the opening procession as our denominational representatives and Susan Mark Landis give the opening prayer of the worship service. Also, Carol Rose, co-director of Christian Peacemaker Teams read a moving reflection written by a CPT worker in Iraq. I wish every Mennonite in the United States could have been there to be energized and sent home to share the Good News that God loves all people, loved us when we were God's enemies and calls us to love our enemies. It was a deepening experience. May there not be the need for another like it.—*June Thomsen, Middletown, Ohio*

Embrace nonconformity again

Conrad Kanagy's presentation and analysis of data from Church Member Profile 2006 gives reason for concern on a number of fronts ("A Look in the Mirror," Feb. 6). Most disconcerting is the increasing political polarization of our church.

We must again embrace nonconformity and apply it to our political engagement as well. This includes how we interact with one another around controversial issues. We must be willing not only to teach others but to learn from them. Rather than identifying with one political party or the other, our identity as Anabaptists and Mennonites and followers of Christ should guide us as we witness to the world about Christ's message of peace and justice.—*Keith Swartzendruber, director, Anabaptist Peace Center, Washington*

Started a group last summer

With all due respect to Anna Groff's article about the Anabaptist Network meeting online (News Digest, March 6), I started a global Mennonites group last summer with a healthy digital membership of 1,700 people. The group's purpose has grown as membership has grown. There are currently a variety of topics relating to faith that people are posting about: from lighthearted Mennonite jokes to provocative questions about the future of the church. It is my hope that this group can serve as a tool to preserve and advance our identity as Mennonites in the world.—*Jeff Hochstetler, Orrville, Ohio*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

During Holy Week, most meaningful to me is: (47 votes)

○ Maundy Thursday (15%)

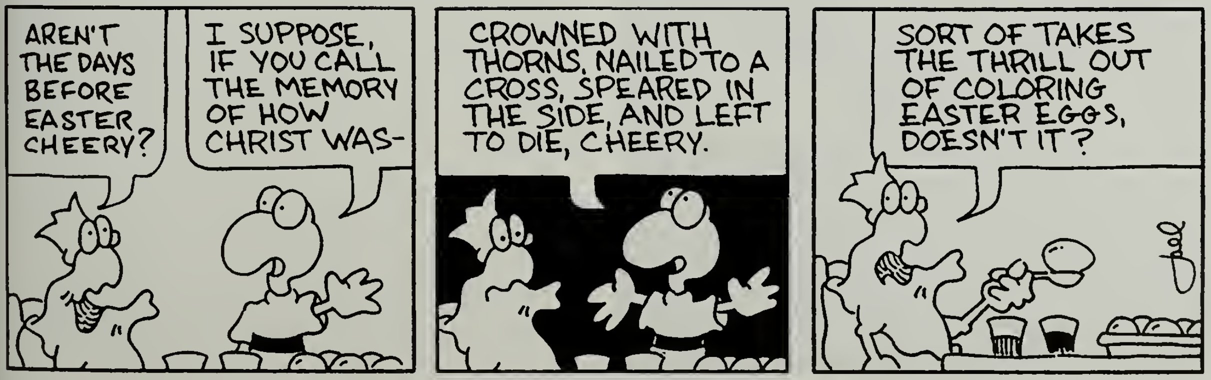
○ Good Friday (11%)

○ Easter Sunday (70%)

○ Not sure (4%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


AREN'T THE DAYS BEFORE EASTER CHEERY?
I SUPPOSE, IF YOU CALL THE MEMORY OF HOW CHRIST WAS-
CROWNED WITH THORNS, NAILED TO A CROSS, SPEARED IN THE SIDE, AND LEFT TO DIE, CHEERY.
SORT OF TAKES THE THRILL OUT OF COLORING EASTER EGGS, DOESN'T IT?
Joel

IN BRIEF

Two national champions in track at Goshen

Taking a program-record nine athletes to the 26th annual national championships March 8-10 in Johnson City, Tenn., Goshen (Ind.) College boasted a pair of national championship performances and an 11th-place team finish, the best result in program history. Freshman Tina Peters and senior Petrana Petkova became Goshen's second and third NAIA National Champions in any sport, claiming wins in the 3,000-meter racewalk and 5,000-meter run, respectively. Peters and Petkova are the school's first female national champions, as they join former Goshen track great John Karanja, who won the outdoor national title in the 400-meter hurdles in both 2002 and 2003. —*Goshen College*

MC USA launches online giving

Late last December, Executive Leadership launched a new online giving Web site featuring more than 1,000 Mennonite Church USA-affiliated organizations, linking the church and its resources across boundaries. The site has channeled around $20,000 to 47 parts of Mennonite Church USA, including congregations, conferences, schools, camps, advocacy groups and social service agencies since Dec. 21, 2006.—*Mennonite Church USA*

Prayer and solidarity for Zimbabwe

STRASBOURG, France—Danisa Ndlovu, president-elect of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and bishop of the Zimbabwe Brethren in Christ (BIC) Church, has urged sisters and brothers around the world to renewed prayer for the people of Zimbabwe.

On March 11, a prayer meeting held near the Zimbabwean capital of Harare was violently broken up by police. One person was killed, and several people, including senior leaders of the Zimbabwean opposition, were injured seriously. Bishop Ndlovu reported he did not know of BIC members involved in the incident. However, he and other BIC leaders have been participating in events organized by church and civil society groups to push for change in Zimbabwe's corrupt and violent regime. He asks for prayer for wisdom for all those working for justice and for a nonviolent end to the current Zimbabwean crisis.

MWC is organizing an international Koinonia delegation to visit the Zimbabwean Brethren in Christ Church Aug. 17-29. The primary purpose of the team will be to stand in visible communion with the Zimbabwe church at this time of unabated duress. Delegation members will divide in two groups to visit several BIC communities, then participate in the church's annual national assembly, Aug. 22-26. The host church has requested that the delegation provide workshops on conflict transformation and peacebuilding. MWC Associate General Secretary Pakisa Tshmikia is organizing and will lead the delegation to Zimbabwe.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Stan North Martin

Celebrating 20 years in Raleigh, N.C.

Children from current and past Raleigh (N.C.) Mennonite Church families lead congregational singing at the congregation's 20th anniversary celebration March 17. The pastors from all 20 years—John and Marilyn Bender, Joe Bontrager and now Duane Beck—led the Sunday morning service together.—*Janelle Bitikofer*

Bluffton announces baseball home opener

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Bluffton University will open its 2007 baseball season with a home contest against conference-foe College of Mount St. Joseph on March 30. The two teams will meet again March 31 for a doubleheader.

"After consulting with members of the team and their coaches, with bereaved families of the players, with Bluffton's athletic department administration and with the Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference of the NCAA, I can announce … there will be a 2007 baseball season at Bluffton University," said Bluffton President James M. Harder.

The team will be coached by assistant coaches Todd Miller and Jason Moore, with oversight from head coach James Grandey as he continues recovering from his injuries. The athletes will wear all-black jerseys to honor their five teammates who lost their lives in the accident.

The baseball team's future had been put on hold following a bus accident in Atlanta March 2. The accident killed four student-athletes, the bus driver and the bus driver's wife. A fifth student-athlete died a week later. Other team members continue to recover from injuries. A student-assistant coach remains hospitalized in Atlanta.—*Bluffton University*

Care for others marked Vandenberg's life

OLDS, Alta.—Martha Boschman Vandenberg was known for her care, whether healing with her hands as a nurse at a Taiwan children's home or interacting with others.

A Mennonite mission worker with her husband, Han, in Taiwan for 38 years, Vandenberg, 78, died March 13, 2007, at the Olds Long-term Care Centre after a long struggle with Lewy Bodies, a form of dementia similar to Alzheimer's disease.

Born on Sept. 7, 1928, on the Canadian prairies, Martha grew in her desire to reach out to other people. A gracious host, writer, nurse, minister, wife, mother and grandmother, Martha's life—especially her warm hospitality and listening ear—touched many.

Martha studied nursing, then Christian education at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, now Canadian Mennonite University. In 1955, she went as a single woman to Taiwan, learned the Taiwanese language and ministered there 1957-1993 with the Commission on Overseas Mission, a predecessor agency of Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network.

While in Taiwan she met co-worker Han Vandenberg from the Netherlands, who later became her husband. They retired to Saskatoon in 1992 and moved to Olds in 1999. Han died in

Happy Birthday
99

Vada Snider

ppy birthday, D.C.

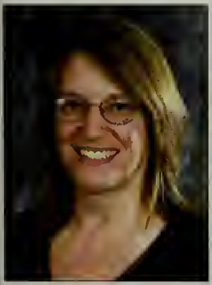
hel College, North Newton, Kan., the oldest Mennonite col- e still operating in North America, has another distinction: ht of its 13 presidents are still living. The oldest, D.C. Wedel, ned 99 on March 16. Pictured with Wedel at Bethesda nnonite Home in Goessel, Kan., from left, are Brenda Bartel; rent Bethel president Barry Bartel; Bethel director of alum- elations Dave Linscheid; advancement and development ff Fred Goering, Cindy Beth, Mary Regier and Sondra ntz.—*Bethel College*

2005.—*Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network*

Miller named church relations director

ELKHART, Ind.—In her new role as director of church relations, Sandy Miller will work to build stronger connections between Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite congregations.

Miller assumed leadership March 5. She'll lead a team dedicated to developing personal relationships with congregations through resources such as ministry support teams, mission banks and their accompanying teaching tools and face-to-face contact with Mission Network workers.


Sandy Miller

In 2005, Miller came to the Mission Network as ministry support team coach. She has helped develop seven core groups of supporters who work together with the Mission Network to increase prayer, communication and encouragement for workers while inviting financial support for their ministry.

She also played an instrumental role in organizing the launch of globe mission bank projects through which more than 8,400 children in 328 congregations have given $52,940 to support mission work in Benin, Argentina, Japan and France.

Miller is studying part-time at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart. Before coming to the Mission Network, she served for 10 years as minister of worship and music at her home congregation, Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. From 1982 to 1989 she worked for the former Mennonite Board of Missions in the church relations department.
—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Satvedi named MCC antiracism co-director

AKRON, Pa.—Valentina Satvedi, the new co-director of Mennonite Central Committee's Anti-Racism Program, grew up in Mumbai, India, a cosmopolitan, multicultural setting. "I had Hindu neighbors, Sikh neighbors, Zoroastrian neighbors, Muslim neighbors," she says. Her Christian faith made her a minority.

Then, as a student at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Ind., she found herself a minority again, this time as an Indian student and a person of color. Today, as director of Urban Theological Formation for the Center for Anabaptist Leadership in Pasadena, Calif., Satvedi works with Anabaptist congregations whose members are primarily immigrants or people of color.

Satvedi, who has a Master of Divinity degree from Bethany and is an ordained Church of the Brethren minister, will serve with Harley Eagle. Based in Castaic, Calif., Satvedi will continue her part-time position with the Center for Anabaptist Leadership. Eagle is in Winnipeg.—*MCC*

Vermont Mennonites help build school in Peru

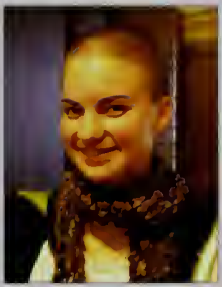
TAFTSVILLE, Vt.—What began four years ago as a school field trip to Peru has evolved into a school-building mission for Vermont Mennonites John and Taylor Hiers, Brian, Andrew and Bailey Bontrager, all of Bethany Mennonite Church in Bridgewater Corners, and Nancy Pejouhy of Taftsville Chapel Mennonite Fellowship.

Along with 38 students, teachers and community members from Woodstock (Vt.) Union High School, the group raised more than $35,000 during the past two years to build a school in San Juan de Huashalado, deep in the Amazon jungle. The group also provided two wells along with medical and school supplies.

During a 14-day trip, students and adults mixed and hauled cement for the adobe brick building, constructed massive roof trusses, and worked and played with the village children. A nurse accompanying the group set up a makeshift clinic in the village and treated more than 260 people. Another group member administered eye tests and gave out hundreds of pairs of donated glasses and sunglasses.—*Nancy Pejouhy*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

IN BRIEF



Losing her hair for a good cause

In March, Melanie Duckworth, a first-year Canadian Mennonite University student, donated her hair to Locks of Love, a nonprofit organization that provides hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children under age 18 who suffer from long-term medical hair loss from any diagnosis. "I've wanted to do it since I was in grade 12," says Duckworth, an international development studies major and member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Victoria, B.C. "I just needed to wait until it was long enough."—*CMU*

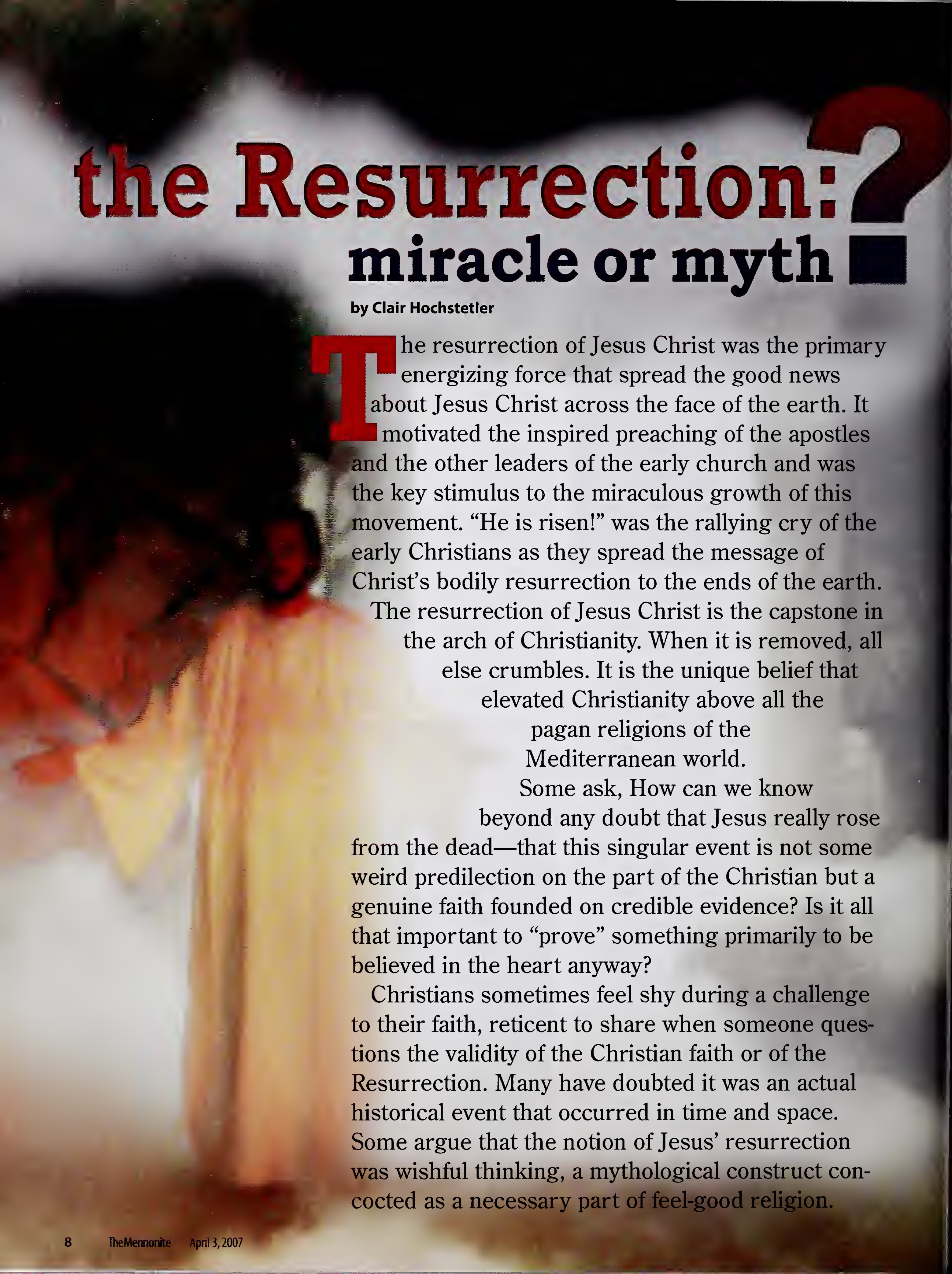
Construction set for Friesen Center for Visual Arts

Construction on the Friesen Center for Visual Arts on the campus of Hesston (Kan.) College is expected to begin in May, following groundbreaking ceremonies Feb. 17. Completion of the estimated $2 million facility is anticipated for December, with occupancy anticipated for March 2008. The 9,500-square-foot building is named in honor of Paul and Wilma Friesen; Paul began the visual arts department at the college 50 years ago.
—*Hesston College*

the Resurrection:

miracle or myth?

by Clair Hochstetler



The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the primary energizing force that spread the good news about Jesus Christ across the face of the earth. It motivated the inspired preaching of the apostles and the other leaders of the early church and was the key stimulus to the miraculous growth of this movement. "He is risen!" was the rallying cry of the early Christians as they spread the message of Christ's bodily resurrection to the ends of the earth.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the capstone in the arch of Christianity. When it is removed, all else crumbles. It is the unique belief that elevated Christianity above all the pagan religions of the Mediterranean world.

Some ask, How can we know beyond any doubt that Jesus really rose from the dead—that this singular event is not some weird predilection on the part of the Christian but a genuine faith founded on credible evidence? Is it all that important to "prove" something primarily to be believed in the heart anyway?

Christians sometimes feel shy during a challenge to their faith, reticent to share when someone questions the validity of the Christian faith or of the Resurrection. Many have doubted it was an actual historical event that occurred in time and space. Some argue that the notion of Jesus' resurrection was wishful thinking, a mythological construct concocted as a necessary part of feel-good religion.

Jesus Christ is alive today and helps us live transformed lives.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the capstone in the arch of Christianity. When it is removed, all else crumbles.

For Christians, however, the importance of this event cannot be minimized, for Christ's resurrection is at the heart of the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Indeed, Jesus himself proclaimed that his resurrection would prove his power over death, and thus his deity (John 2:18-22).

But what credible evidence for this principle of faith will address the questions skeptics typically have? Does belief in the Resurrection rest on blind faith—as a matter of the heart—but leave one's intellectual integrity open to question?

Of the many evidences recorded in the Bible itself, none is more compelling than several events documented by eye witnesses: The resurrected Christ appeared to more than 500 individuals at a single time (1 Corinthians 15:6). Christ appeared to other individuals as well, providing "many convincing proofs" of his resurrection (Acts 1:3). His resurrection body was even touched on two occasions (Matthew 28:9; John 20:17). Then he challenged his disciples (Luke 24:39) and later on Thomas (John 20:27) to examine his wounds.

Despite the biblical evidence, some have suggested that Jesus' body was likely stolen from the tomb, either by the Romans, the Jews or the disciples. However, as we consider carefully the alternative explanations, logic will drive us back to the conclusion that Christ rose from the dead.

The Romans had no reason to steal Christ's body. After all, the primary motivation of Pilate and the brutal Roman soldiers was to put him down to keep the peace in Palestine; to do otherwise would severely compromise this mission and put them out of their jobs.

The Jewish religious leaders also had no motive to steal the body, since that would only stir up the movement they had tried to crush. Besides, if the Jewish leaders had stolen the body, the logical motivation would be to openly display the body later on, to prove to the disciples and the world that Jesus had not really risen from the dead.

Could a few of Jesus' disciples have become sufficiently equipped to steal his body? Though I have my own experience with the inner workings of grief and the professional perspective of one who supports many others who face it, I have absorbed only a small degree of the shock and despair the disciples surely felt that weekend their leader was executed. Most people would have a hard time recovering from the trauma the disciples experienced. Even the boldest of Jesus' followers, Simon Peter, was unable to stand with Jesus when he was arrested. They apparently went into hiding after his bloody scourging, crucifixion and burial.

The fact that they soon became "lions of the faith"—willing to endure arduous journeys "to the ends of the earth" and become martyrs for their convictions is one of the most convincing proofs of Jesus' resurrection. There is neither emotional nor intellectual integrity in the notion that one of them would choose to suffer and die for a cause they knew to be a lie—even if somehow a couple of them had mustered up the emotional and physical capacity to steal his dead body from a sealed tomb guarded by ruthless Roman soldiers. They could only have been motivated to this extent by the truth of the resurrection.

Belief in the Resurrection does not constitute a blind leap into a dark chasm but a step into the light.

Another theory that has been resuscitated in a desperate attempt to explain away the Resurrection is the so-called "swoon theory." This theory says that Jesus did not really die on the cross but merely passed out and later revived—all by himself. However, this theory is hopelessly flawed.

Just think about it for a minute: Even if you have only read the book and not seen the movie *The Passion of the Christ*, it's virtually impossible to imagine that Jesus endured several trials, a crown of thorns, a relentless Roman scourging, a crucifixion, a spear thrust into his side, the loss of a great deal of blood, going three days without medical attention or food, pushing a two-ton stone away from his own tomb's entrance, then physically overcoming an armed Roman guard while walk-

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ing on pierced feet and ankles. The "swoon theory" is, merely from the medical point of view, ridiculous in the extreme. Yet some people want to hang their hats on it.

Belief in the Resurrection, therefore, does not constitute a blind leap into a dark chasm but a step into the light. Indeed, the evidence for Christ's resurrection, based on these modern medical and psychological principles, is overwhelming—if one is willing to examine it with an open mind, desiring to know the truth.

However, the truth of the Resurrection does not depend upon logical proofs. Sally Gillette, a friend with whom I shared a previous draft of this meditation, said: "The most convincing proof of Jesus' resurrection is the fact that he is here with us now, and his living presence can be discerned. Not with eyes [like his disciples had back then]—at least not usually—but with the heart and ... with a powerful certitude that cannot be explained, only experienced."

Because of the model of his life and his risen power in us now, he sets us free to respond with his grace, love and power to work for true peace and justice.

We have not even taken into consideration the great stream of miracles, amazing experiences and profound transformation in the lives and character of those who have followed him through history. If one is able to maintain an open mind and an open heart, it is virtually impossible to avoid the conclusion that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead and is alive and well—reigning graciously as our Lord (Revelation 1:18) in a kingdom that is "not of this world" yet has everything to do with the way we are to live together on this earth. The beauty of the Christian faith is that, at its heart, it doesn't even need to be proven to be true.

Let's emphasize that the Resurrection of Christ is not just an Easter-time phenomenon to be celebrated in song and service. Rather it is a truth that can daily fill us with hope for living. For not only did the Resurrection of Christ transform the disciples of Jesus from cowards (who hung out in the shadows when their leader suffered) into the great spiritual leaders that history shows they were, his resurrection continues to transform lives today.

The heart of the gospel is that Jesus was sent by God to embody a message of grace, power, forgiveness and freedom that transforms lives, relationships and ways of thinking. He communicated this message effectively to all who would listen, to the point that his ministry started to usurp the authority of those in power and control. These "powers that be" could not allow this to continue and colluded to stop him—or so they thought. But God raised him from death and thus vindicated his life and ministry. Because of the model of his life and his risen power in us now, he sets us free to respond with his grace, love and power to work for true peace and justice—while working against the powers of sin, oppression, death and the demonic that have afflicted our lives and communities since the beginning of the human race.

These are the implications of Christ's Passion and Resurrection, which are largely missing from the more narrowly defined scope of the movie I mentioned: Jesus Christ was, and is, relevant to a world where countless fellow human beings suffer violence, injustice, disease and crushing poverty. He is relevant to a world where those who respond to the call to be his followers are being challenged personally by the claims of Jesus in their lives. His life, death and resurrection challenge you and me to act daily, in small yet important ways, to help transform that world and bear witness to how God's love and grace make a difference.

It will be a wonderful bonus to have transformed bodies in the future—beyond time and space. "In an instant, in the twinkling of an eye," we shall be transformed into resurrected bodies—like Jesus' own resurrected body.

Indeed, the Resurrection of Jesus is not just wishful thinking. Jesus Christ is alive and available to you and me. He can fuel a robust faith, provide real hope for relevant living and sustain enduring motivation for the future. He is risen indeed. Let's celebrate this reality every day.

Clair Hochstetler is chaplain of the Goshen (Ind.) Health System. This is adapted from an Easter sunrise service presentation in 2004.

Gethsemane story

by Thomas Showalter

He too was almost human.
Waiting at the gate to the garden,
halfway up the mountain,
he too was crying at the sky,
rehearsing the ways he did not know
why he must do what he must do.
His lips were dry. The soldiers
would know the man with
or without his hasty kiss
which he, unmarried, unloved
had held inside himself
these dusty years. But the voice
was insistent. Its words had become
a song for him: You will
go, you will become
the other man.

Thomas Showalter lives in Stillwater, Okla.

His long throat aching for anyone's rain

by Laurie Klein

It's a thirsty crowd—even old
friends abandon him
like a failing well. His throat

echoes an emptied wind as if,
dangling,
God's tin cup tolled

noon. He was always
more than a reservoir
at the known world's

end. Mute now, soon now,
mothering silence comes,
covers his mouth. The stone

rolls into place. Darkness,
and vinegar rain, then
the cloth, rending,

plangent—the buried
open their cracked lips; ah,
underground, springs gather.

Laurie Klein lives in Deer Park, Wash.

A reflection on Mark 11

Is it the

by Eleanor Niemala Beachy

FreeStockPhotos.com

While I don't have a fig tree in my yard and have never gathered figs, I have learned that determining the time for finding ripe figs is more complicated than, say, finding ripe apples. There are the first-ripe figs, the summer figs and, rarely, winter figs, but these are not edible. Timing is the key to finding ripe figs; and time is the key to the story about Jesus looking for figs (Mark 11).

Jesus and his disciples travel back and forth the 1.5-mile stretch between Bethany and Jerusalem. Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a borrowed colt amid the "hosannas" of the people around him.

Our Palm Sunday Scripture readings and sermons often stop at this point, but Mark's story does not. Jesus and his followers go on to the temple, where Jesus looks around. The Greek word used here for "look" doesn't imply a casual glance. Mark uses the word "periblepo" five other times in his Gospel. Four of these times Jesus is the one who "looks around"; in each situation he looks deliberately, with strong feeling. This time, after "looking around at everything" in the temple, he goes out of the city to Bethany with the disciples. The time is late. How late? Is it already too late?

The next morning they are on the way back to Jerusalem. They see a fig tree in leaf. Jesus is hungry. He goes up to the tree to see if there might be some figs on it, even though it is too early for figs. In fact, Mark says it is not even the season for figs. There are no figs on the tree. But why is Jesus looking for figs when it is not the time for figs?

A pattern is emerging. Jesus had looked around in the temple intentionally, as though looking for something in particular. Now he looks for figs. The temple and the fig tree are parallel in the story.

To the Jewish mind, steeped in the writings of the prophets, fig tree imagery was symbolic. The blossoming of the fig tree indicated God's blessing, and the withering of the fig tree symbolized God's judgment. The prophet Micah pictured God searching for the first-ripe figs, which God hungers for—the upright and godly. But God searches in vain, as the summer harvest of figs is past. God's seeking the first-ripe figs after the harvest of summer figs is the prophet's way of stressing that nothing is found; the especially good fruit of righteousness for which God hungers is not there. You might as well look for new figs after the harvest is over—that's how unlikely it is that God will find righteousness among God's people.

Jesus finds no figs; it was not the season for figs. That's how unlikely it was there would be any. Is that also how unlikely it is he will find the "figs of righteousness" in the temple?

It was not the time for figs. In Mark, the word used here for time ("kairos") is not chronological time. *The Kittle Dictionary of the New Testament* describes "kairos" this way: "Know the critical situation in your life, know that it demands a decision, train yourself to recognize the decisive point in your life and act accordingly."

Is there such a time in your life—a critical time when you have to make a decision that will make a big difference? Is there such a time in the life of the church?

Finding no figs, Jesus says, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." Now with the image of the fruitless fig tree on the minds of the disciples, the temple comes into view again. Here the outer court is filled with pilgrims who have come long distances to offer sacrifices. But where are they to get the animals and birds needed? They have to buy them, and there are plenty of merchants ready to sell to them for a price.

The worshipers also have to change the Roman coins they've brought with them for the temple shekel to pay the temple tax. Plenty of money changers will make the exchange for a fee.

Jesus sees all this activity, but this time he does not just look around. He drives out the sellers and buyers, overturns the tables of the money changers and knocks over the seats of those who sell doves, which are the sacrifices of the poor.

Driving out all this business activity essentially interrupts the religious activity of making sacrifices as well. No wonder Jesus has been called "The Great Upsetter."

time for figs?

He gives the reason for his actions: "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples?' But you have made it a den of robbers!" (Isaiah 56:6-7).

Jesus clearing the temple does not please many of the people involved. Those making a profit from the trading and those collaborating with the Roman government to keep their favored positions do not want the status quo disturbed. Those wanting to overthrow the Roman government through revolt and assassinations also have no use for Jesus' way. Those who think of themselves as "God's special people," who are satisfied with their own ways of worshiping, have no interest in including people of other nations. To all of these, Jesus is "The Great Upsetter."

But the crowds listen with rapt attention as Jesus teaches in the temple. The religious leaders observe this with growing fear. They decide they must get rid of Jesus.

Jesus leaves the temple; the hour is late. The time—the critical time—has come. Jesus goes outside the city. He and his disciples spend the night again at Bethany; in the morning they again set out for Jerusalem. Again they come by the fig tree.

Peter says, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered."

The story of the temple cleansing is framed by the account of the fig tree.

Jesus responds to Peter's observation with an enigmatic statement: "Have faith in God. Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you."

The disciples fail to make a connection between a fruitless fig tree and a fruitless temple that is called "the temple of the mount." They cannot imagine faith existing without the temple. The temple symbolizes all the religious and political hopes of the Jewish people.

If the temple is gone, what remains? Jesus answers, "Have faith in God." God remains.

Jesus continues, "I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours." The call for faith in God in the time of crisis, the time of decision, is connected to the fact that the answer to prayer has already come. At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus said: "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15).

To his call for faith and prayer Jesus adds, "And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses." Living in God's reign requires right relationships between its members. The community of faith, prayer and forgiveness depend only on God.

The enacted parable of the fig tree brings us, as it did the disciples, a double message of judgment and hope. It brings judgment when we fail to recognize that the critical time for understanding Jesus' message and responding to it is now. It brings hope when we recognize that God's reign is present with us in Jesus' call and respond in faith, prayer and forgiveness.

In light of this it is never the time to

- take advantage of others because circumstances allow us to;
- go through our worship rituals and at the same time shut out the "Gentiles"—those labeled "different";
- kill in an effort to make our religious beliefs "safe";
- think nothing bad can happen to our church, community or country because we regard ourselves favored by God above all others.

It is the time to

- challenge the powers, whether government, business or religious organizations, when they exploit the disadvantaged, even when the status quo is in our favor;
- make room for the stranger in the house of prayer;
- live in faith that makes the fear that will kill to keep one's interests intact nonexistent;
- live in faith that God remains when our sources of security in this world threaten to fail us and that the mountains that stand in the way of God's reign will be removed;
- live in the power of prayer that believes God's reign has come in Christ Jesus;
- live in the freedom of forgiving others so that we, too, receive God's forgiveness.

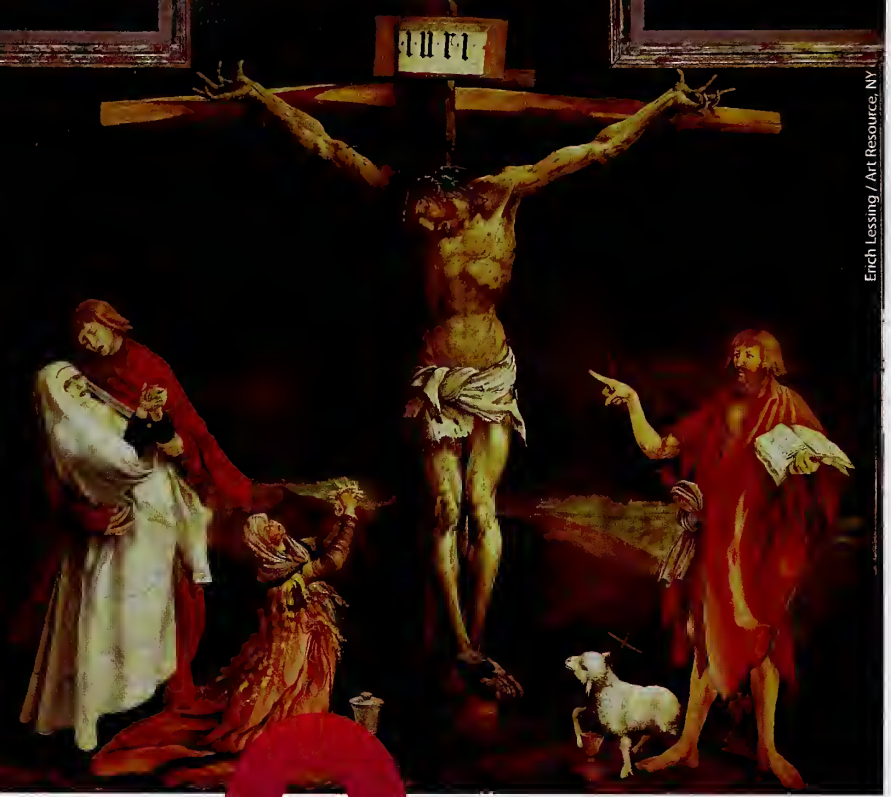
Will the figs of righteousness be found more readily among us than one can find figs out of season? Will they be there, ready, when our Lord comes and "looks around"?

Eleanor Niemala Beachy is a member of Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

The call for faith in God in the time of crisis, the time of decision, is connected to the fact that the answer to prayer has already come.

Victim

by John D. Rempel


Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY

On Good Friday, the day Christ died, we gather in awe and wonder, in sorrow and pity. We come in heartfelt gratitude. We flinch as we imagine Jesus pleading with his Father in the garden, being mocked by the soldiers, carrying his own cross. Yet instinctively we know the salvation of the world is unfolding before our inward eye. The force of the world's evil and the weight of the world's sin are poised to pin Jesus down, nail him to a tree and let him die. We imagine we are there, torn by uncertainty at what we would do—join Jesus, with the Marys and John, in his abandonment or desert him with the rest of the disciples?

And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood?
Died he for me, who caused his shame,
for me who him to death pursued?
Amazing love, how can it be,
that thou, O God, shouldst die for me!—Charles Wesley

We meet Jesus in the midst of accusation and betrayal. Pilate orders Jesus to be flogged in the hope of satisfying his accusers that this blasphemer has been rightly punished. But nothing will satisfy those who want him dead. He is a marked man. As Jesus awaits his fate, he is made the plaything of soldiers—they weave a crown of thorns that pierces his brow. "Hail, King of the Jews," they shout in mock reverence.

It is a pathetic sight, but in the eyes of those convinced Jesus is the number one enemy of God and country, no torture can be cruel enough. The prisoner is sent out to the people, bloodied and beaten. The crowds shriek, "Crucify him; crucify him." At noon, Pilate relents and hands Jesus over to the soldiers and the mob. The timing of Jesus' condemnation is not lost on the Gospel writer. The noon hour on the Day of Passover was the time when lambs were slaughtered for the feast. Jesus goes forth as the final lamb, the last sacrifice. Once for all he bears sin away and breaks its power to condemn.

One of the most astonishing and overwhelming portrayals of the crucifixion is by the 16th-century artist Mattaeus Gruenewald. His painting was part of an altar piece he created for the chapel of a hospital for people suffering from syphilis. When we look closely at his depiction, we see that Jesus' whole body is covered with open lesions. It's hard to resist the suggestion that Jesus is being portrayed as a syphilitic. In doing so, he bears the marks of the most dreaded disease of that age. It is like the AIDS sufferer today, "one from whom others hide their faces" (Isaiah 53:3). The message is unmistakable: No infirmity is beyond the compassion of Jesus, no affliction unredeemed by his sacrifice, uncleansed by his blood.

Matthew, Mark and Luke place the full weight of the Passion story on Jesus' anguish, on his willing victimhood. Indeed, who could remain unmoved by Jesus' sweat drops of blood in the garden, begging the Father to remove this cup of suffering? Who does not want to cry out on his behalf when judge and crowd alike scream condemnation—and Jesus is silent? Who does not groan at the sight of Jesus' helplessness under the weight of the cross and heave a sigh of relief when Simon of Cyrene lifts the crushing burden from the condemned man's shoulders? And who is not drawn into the helplessness of Jesus' mother and friends as they watch him from a distance being tortured?

John wants believers to remember about Jesus' prayer in the garden not only his sweat drops of blood but his burning resolve.

It is not hard for us to believe in Jesus on the cross as a victim; it is almost impossible to believe

and victor

A Good Friday meditation on the cross according to the Passion narrative of John

in Jesus on the cross as a victor. The special contribution of John's Gospel to the Passion drama is the insight that in the midst of his suffering, Jesus still seizes the initiative. John wants believers to remember about Jesus' prayer in the garden not only his sweat drops of blood but his burning resolve. The Gospel writer recalls not only Jesus' silence before Pilate but his unflinching rebuttal of the accusations against him. On the way to Golgotha, nothing is said in the Fourth Gospel about Simon of Cyrene: what is seared into the memory is that Jesus carries his own cross. When he is hanging on the cross, Jesus does not leave his mother and friends helpless at a distance but beckons them to within hearing distance to see that Mary is cared for by the Beloved Disciple. Finally, before Jesus breathes his last, he declares, "It is finished"—what I came for is accomplished.

From the other Passion accounts we remember Jesus' dread that the God of heaven and earth might—like Abraham about to sacrifice Isaac—be forsaking his only begotten Son, delivering him on our behalf over to the power of evil. This dread was surely a part of Jesus' dying dread. But John insists that his readers remember something more, Jesus' dying confidence. The cry of anguish in the Fourth Gospel is at the same time a cry of conquest. In being pursued to the cross by the powers of destruction and death, Jesus becomes their pursuer. He casts himself on the goodness of God with relentless trust; he lets himself be God's lightning rod. All the trespasses and woes of creation crack like fire through the cosmic sky and strike Jesus dead.

Christian depictions of Jesus' crucifixion in the West are largely inspired by the Passion story as told by Matthew, Mark and Luke. Jesus is overwhelmingly portrayed as the victim, the prey of sin, evil and death, as we see so hauntingly in Gruenewald's altar piece. By contrast, John inspires the icon painters of the Eastern church, where Jesus is depicted as a victor: He stoops to conquer. A common subject for portrayals of the crucifixion in the East shows Jesus reaching down from the cross, bending low to reach the hand of Adam in hell. Jesus stretches down into the pit to lift the first sinner, and all who came after him, to freedom. The message is clear: The power of everything that imprisons us—fear, revenge, greed, lust (each of us has our own list)—is broken on the cross, and we are free.

This is why John wrote a unique account of the Passion, so the church would never forget that Jesus' derision is at the same time his glorification. It is in his death that the power of love is most fully known. Yet we huddle in our prisons of fear because we refuse to believe that love can have the last word. When we do so we mock the claim that no corner of time and space or of our own lives is outside the redeeming reach of God's love. When we hoard possessions, power and friendship rather than risk being generous with them, we belittle the victory of the cross. When we put our confidence in wealth and military might rather than trusting in God's provision, we belittle the victory of the cross.

When we hoard possessions, power and friendship rather than risk being generous with them, we belittle the victory of the cross.

On this most solemn day of the year, words fail us, so we turn to the awesomely simple gesture Jesus shared with his disciples on the night he offered himself up. Paul asks: "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16). When we break the bread and bless the cup, we participate in the very life of Jesus laid down for us. We observe Good Friday as the most sacred day of the year because on it we reenter that event, above all others, that rescues the world from despair. On it Jesus became the last sacrifice, the final scapegoat, breaking the vicious circle of an eye for an eye, making forgiveness possible.

"It is finished." The work of love is done. Now the work of love can begin.

John D. Rempel teaches theology at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

Photo provided

Things fell into place: At the installation service last Aug. 27 are, from left, Randy Detweiler (lead pastor at Howard-Miami Mennonite Church), Sarah, Tim Lichti (regional conference minister) and Lee Miller (community life pastor).

Young, female & a pastor

by Sarah Roth

Sarah Rohrer, 22, moves from Mennonite college student to Mennonite youth pastor.

Don't let anyone look down on you for being young. Instead, make your speech, behavior, love, faith and purity an example to other believers.—1 Timothy 4:12.

Written in hot-pink letters on the Howard-Miami Mennonite youth Web site, this verse is as much about the 15 high-school students, as it is their 22-year-old pastor, Sarah Rohrer. After graduating from Goshen (Ind.) College in 2006, Rohrer entered church ministry and now serves as a full-time youth pastor at Howard Mennonite Church, a congregation of about 150 in Kokomo, Ind.

"It's so humbling to be in the position I'm in," she says. "I'm just amazed at the kinds of theological questions my youth ask. This is such an important time in life, and to be able to have an impact on their lives—it's just amazing to be a part of that."

Teaching happens all week long for Sarah. She plans weekly activities and service projects and can be spotted at the many high school soccer games, choir concerts, fall plays and musicals her youth are involved in. "I attend events at least two to three times a week," she says. On Sunday morning and evenings, she often leads worship, plans children's time and teaches Sunday school, and writes the church newsletter. In January, she preached her first sermon on the importance of worship, "King of Endless Worth."

Though Sarah has been active in the church since childhood, she didn't always envision herself in a leadership position. Her home congregation, Forest Hills Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., did not support women pastors—a belief Sarah espoused through college. "When I first came to college I was against women pastors," she says. "But here I am now."

Sarah's decision came out of her experiences in church ministry, as well as encouragement and gift discernment with friends and mentors. While a student at Goshen, she was involved in a traveling worship team and led Bible studies. She spent the summer of 2004 as an intern with the North Leo Mennonite Church in Leo, Ind., through the Ministry Inquiry Program and served as a co-leader of the junior high youth at Life Springs, a local congregation.

"I went to a youth ministry symposium at AMBS [Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.], where I realized that young people need a vocabulary for faith," she says. She realized how important it was for youth "not to read a flat Bible" and to look for relevant applications to daily living—something she tries to communicate.

But it was during a semester in China through Goshen College's Study-Service Term, that her vocation became clearer. Sarah taught English at Sichuan Normal University to Chinese students that had little exposure to Christianity. "My trip to China confirmed a lot of my gifts and passions for me. I was amazed at how little some of my students knew about Christian beliefs and at how much I love teaching. The idea of teaching young people about faith—about being followers of Jesus and the whole process of discipleship—made me excited."

A communications major, Rohrer also took

Associated
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AMBS window

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Panorama

A roof with a view

Steve Schweitzer, Ph.D.

"When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof; otherwise you might have bloodguilt on your house, if anyone should fall from it." (Deut 22:8 NRSV)

I often begin discussion of the relevancy of the Old Testament for Christians with this verse buried in its seemingly endless laws. It provides a clear example of how Christians can bridge the often incomprehensible difference between the Old and New Testaments.

A good first question: "What is a parapet?" The dictionary states: "a short wall designed to provide protection."

The second question: "So, why do I need one on my roof, especially since no one is ever up there?" The answer comes from ancient Israelite architecture: homes were constructed with *flat* roofs that were covered by a canopy intended as extra living space (see Judges 16:27; Acts 10:9). The wall prevented someone from falling off the roof, thereby being injured or killed.

This historical and cultural knowledge reveals a humanitarian principle: people must maintain their property in such a way as to prevent someone else from getting hurt. In our contemporary society, many communities have a similar ordinance requiring that swimming pools be surrounded by a fence to prevent accidental drowning. However, at least in North America, we do not have stipulations requiring parapets on rooftops. Why? We don't typically have flat roofs. Our culture and biblical culture are not the same.

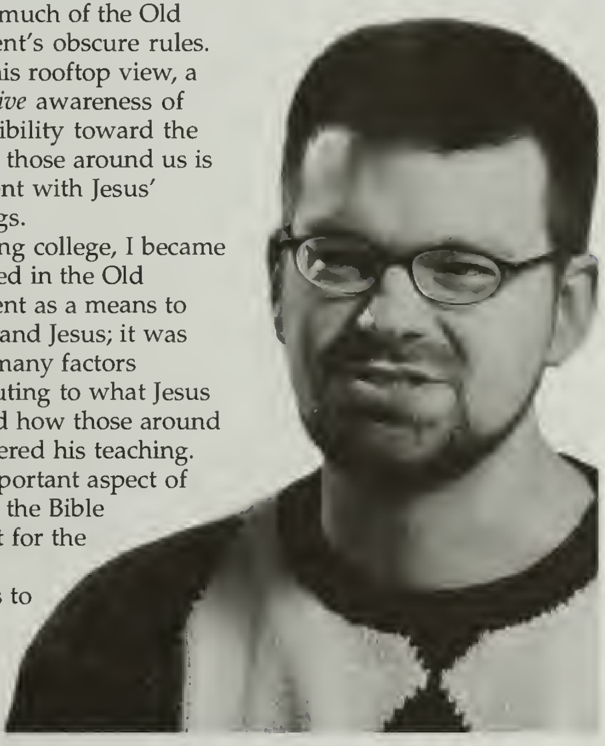
A third question: "Should Christians observe this command?" Or, "Should Christians build parapets on their roofs?" No. This command about parapets is a *culturally-conditioned* regulation.

However, the reason for the law is worth pondering: humanitarian concern for another's well-being (*shalom*). This *principle* lies behind much of the Old Testament's obscure rules. From this rooftop view, a *progressive* awareness of responsibility toward the good of those around us is consistent with Jesus' teachings.

During college, I became interested in the Old Testament as a means to understand Jesus; it was one of many factors contributing to what Jesus said and how those around him filtered his teaching. One important aspect of making the Bible relevant for the church today is to understand the situation in which it was written. When we notice the points of continuity and discontinuity between then and now, we are able to use the Bible theologically, pastorally and ethically in a more consistent and authentic way.

So, don't build a parapet on your roof. Instead, live in ways that promote the well-being of others. Jesus (and the Old Testament) would agree.

Steve Schweitzer joined the AMBS faculty in 2006 as assistant professor of Old Testament. He is a member of Prince of Peace Church of the Brethren in South Bend, Ind. ●



J. Tyler Klassen

Festival focuses on telling the Bible's stories

Abraham accepting a new name. Ruth declaring her loyalty. Jesus seeing the heavens torn open after his baptism.

The participants who gathered for AMBS's first biblical storytelling festival experienced all of this and more. The Sunday afternoon event on February 18 brought 120 people together to hear and join in these key stories in our faith heritage.

In the first session of the event, stories were performed in a variety of ways to demonstrate how biblical storytelling has power to communicate the Gospel and how the Bible's stories can be shared orally.

Three workshops followed in the second hour:

- First person biblical storytelling, led by AMBS student Moriah Hurst;
- Biblical storytelling with children in worship, led by Lois Kaufmann, pastor at Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen and AMBS student;
- Storytelling in other kinds of ministry, led by June Alliman Yoder, Jacob Elias, and Daniel Schipani, AMBS faculty members. ●

Members of the fall semester Biblical Storytelling class, plus several additional students, performed the entire book of Ruth at the February 18 festival. They used arrays of candles to help the audience identify the characters in the story.

Pastors and students study Paul together

A mix of six pastors, students in an on-campus course and students in an online course are all exploring the ministry and writings of Paul the Apostle. Jacob Elias, professor of New Testament, is leading the exploration through a course on Romans and a pastor-faculty study group, "Engaging Pastor Paul."

The six pastors met at AMBS in January and are spending the late winter and spring months communicating by e-mail and internet. They will meet again in May or June at the conclusion of the study.

Part of the assignment of these six pastors is to listen in on students in the two classes as they share with each other their responses to study questions on Paul's letter to the Romans. Each pastor has been assigned to a pair of students and they may enter into the digital conversation as they wish. They are invited to share insights from their ministry to help students understand what Paul was saying to first-century house churches and to the church today.

In this way these pastors become co-teachers for the students. The collaboration is possible through the seminary's Engaging Pastors program, a cluster of ten projects that brings together professors and pastors for sustained conversation and learning. Pastors in the group are (from upper left around the circle in the photo above):

Tyler Hartford, Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.;
Todd Lehman, Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, Ore.;
Mark Schlotterbeck, Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, Pa.
Bryce Miller, Shalom Mennonite Church, Tucson, Ariz.;
Ed Kauffman, executive conference minister for Central Plains Mennonite Conference, Sioux Falls, S.D.;
Steve Musselman, Zion Mennonite Church, Birdsboro, Pa.;
Jacob Elias, professor of New Testament, AMBS. ●

Translator of *The Message* joins pastor-professor study group

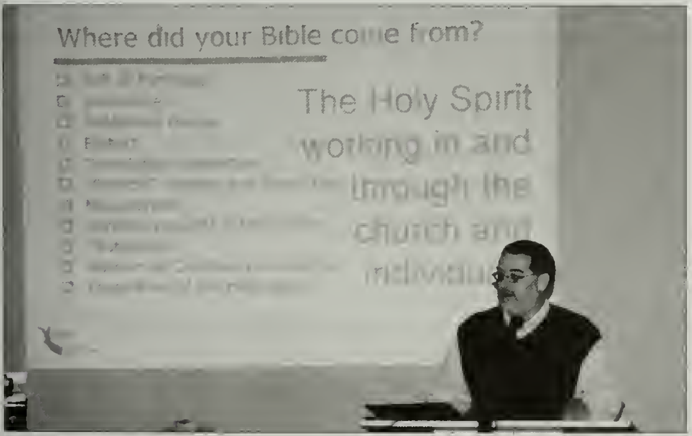
"We were marinating in Scripture." That's how Alan Kreider, AMBS professor of mission and church history, described a gathering of pastors and professors in late February.

The experiences of the session—Bible study, worship and discussion—focused on teaching the Bible in the congregation. This session of the 2006–07 Pastor-Faculty Colloquy included Eugene Peterson, who has written extensively about pastoral ministry and who created the translation of the Bible called *The Message*.

Eugene Peterson (center photo) told the group about his first attempts to teach the Bible in the congregation where he was pastor for 29 years. Though there were only three students in that first class, he continues to draw on what he learned in that experience. "I wanted them to get the story and start living it. I wanted them to have those voices reverberating in their lives."

Pastors who participated were Tim Kuepfer (in left photo), Rachel Miller Jacobs (right photo), Jennifer Davis Sensenig, Don Rheinheimer, Roy Hange, Carol Penner, Phil Waite and Rudy Baergen who was unable to attend the February session. Professors were Daniel Schipani, Mary Schertz, Alan Kreider and Arthur Paul Boers. To find out more, including which congregations these pastors serve, see the AMBS web site: www.ambs.edu/news-and-publications/news/colloquy.

This project is one of ten in the seminary's Engaging Pastors program, which aims to bring pastors and professors together for collaborative learning and work. ●


Where did your Bible come from?
The Holy Spirit working in and through the church and individu

"I have confidence in the Holy Spirit," Loren Johns, AMBS academic dean, told participants in the weekend learning event for Journey. "I'm here at the seminary because I believe God was at work in shaping Scripture."

Journey is a conference-based program of mentoring and undergraduate study that prepares people for ministry. Participants gather two times a year for intensive weekends of workshops and lectures. Loren led the February 23–24 event, focusing on biblical interpretation. To learn more, see www.journeyprogram.net.

Campaign Report

next Generation
AMBS Fund for Church Leadership

AMBS has concluded its Next Generation fund-raising campaign, reaching the goal of $20.4 million in cash and letters of intent.

Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president, shared the news with faculty, staff and students on January 23, announcing that the final component—the library and campus center—was fully funded.

The campaign, begun in July 2001, was established to strengthen the seminary as it prepares the next generation of leaders for the church. Components included:

- New library and campus center ($8.4 million, including $1.9 endowment for operation and maintenance);
- Annual Fund;
- Scholarships;
- !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth (most of this funding was received as a grant from Lilly Endowment for the first four years of the program);
- Endowment for faculty support;
- Church Leadership Center programming and staff;
- Chapel of the Word, a small chapel for teaching worship and preaching.

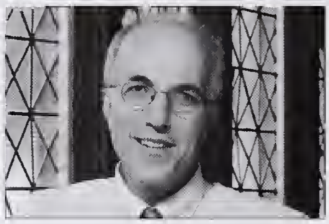
"We give thanks to God and we owe an enormous debt of gratitude to donors—friends from across Canada and the United States, alumni, employees, board members and students—for generous, even sacrificial giving," Kraybill said. ●

President's Window

Seven years ago, when AMBS Dean Willard Swartley suffered a heart attack, I hurried to the hospital where he was in care. Hospital staff explained that I should only be with my colleague a few minutes. He was in precarious condition, and the next hours would be critical for his survival.

Willard greeting me warmly and weakly. I asked him what he was thinking about. "I'm going through the Psalms," he said, "trying to remember something about each. I think I got all but ten of them." Like putting money into the bank, Willard had invested for decades in learning and praying the Psalms. When crisis came, he had a spiritual reservoir from which to draw.

I resolved to memorize Scripture—especially the Psalms. Almost daily since then I have memorized at least a verse of Scripture. Whole chapters of the Psalms and a few other books of the Bible gradually take root in my imagination. I pray those passages when I am afraid or angry or exuberant or penitent.



At AMBS, rigorous study of the Bible stretches intellect and feeds imagination. Biblical storytelling draws us into the drama of Scripture. Worship—including a new addition of an Anabaptist prayer book to be published this spring—mines the wealth of God's word. The new AMBS library will have at its center the Studer Bible Collection—hundreds of Bible translations in scores of languages. AMBS courses; publications from the Institute of Mennonite Studies, such as *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology;* and commentaries on lectionary Scriptures on the AMBS web site provide rich resources for all who study the Word of God seriously.

By Gods' grace, Willard Swartley survived a serious heart attack and returned to teaching and writing. "You have the words of eternal life," Simon Peter once said to Jesus (John 6:68). Jesus' words—and the whole library of biblical literature—nourish the mind and soul of everyone who takes time to read, study, and memorize. You never know when those texts will become a wellspring of life.

— J. Nelson Kraybill

Alumni News

Mary Etta King (Master of Arts in Christian Formation 2006) and **Linford King** (Master of Divinity 1982) became codirectors of Kairos School of Spiritual Formation, Lancaster, Pa., in October. Mary Etta also has a private practice of spiritual direction. Linford continues as bishop of the Lancaster District of the Lancaster Mennonite Church.

Rachel Nafziger Hartzler (Master of Arts in Christian Formation 2004) has completed a book, *Grief and Sexuality: Life after losing a spouse*, published by Herald Press. She is pastor of Pleasant Oaks Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

James H. Waltner (Bachelor of Divinity 1958) is author of the Psalms commentary published in November by Herald Press. This is volume 20 in the Believers Church Bible Commentary series.

Panorama

Invitation to prayer for AMBS

From noon on May 4 to noon on May 5, AMBS is hosting a strategic planning symposium. Church leaders, business people, young adults, people from ethnic minority groups in the church and the AMBS board will gather to discern where the Spirit of God is leading the seminary. AMBS invites everyone in the church to join in by offering prayers for God's guidance and blessing for this gathering.

Commencement 2007

AMBS expects 40 students to graduate on May 19, 2007. April Yamasaki, pastor of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, BC, will address the graduates in the commencement service. Please pray for these graduates as they seek God's direction for the next steps in their ministry.

Construction progress

Construction of the new library and campus center at AMBS is on schedule with plans to move into the new facility this summer. See photos of the work and watch progress on the web-cam at **www.ambs.edu/giving/library-project.**

Prayer book offers seasonal resources

Take our moments and our days: An Anabaptist prayer book now includes prayer guides for special seasons of the church year. Daily guides to morning and evening prayers are provided on the AMBS web site: **www.ambs.edu/prayerbook.** Select the link for *Holy Week* or *Easter.* Prayer guides for Ordinary Time will be published by Herald Press this summer.

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Volume 17 Issue 2

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor and Designer: Mary E. Klassen
Photos pages 2–3: Mary E. Klassen

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Youth Ministry classes from professor Bob Yoder, now campus minister at Goshen. Yoder first informed Sarah that Howard-Miami Mennonite Church was seeking a full-time youth pastor. "Bob challenged me to be aware of gifts I have in a ministry setting," she says. "He thought I'd be a good fit for this church and encouraged me to apply."

In March of her senior year, she received a call from the head of the search committee at Howard-Miami and later was asked to interview as a candidate. "I was still processing whether this was what I was called to do," Sarah says. She met with the pastor and elder team, followed by a meeting with the five youth sponsors. Two days later, the church held a fellowship meal ice-cream social so that she could meet the youth and their parents. The next day, the search committee affirmed her.

Since Sarah would be the first woman pastor at Howard-Miami, lead pastor Randy Detweiler proposed another informal interview in front of the congregation. "We wanted to have two interviews because of some questions people had. We wanted to give people time to pray about it, and it gave me a chance to pray as well," says Sarah.

Following a carry-in fellowship meal, Sarah spoke about her family, her background and the experiences that shaped her faith journey. "It was an exhausting weekend," she says, "but I trusted the process." Sarah then returned to college to take her final May term class and graduate.

When Sarah returned to Howard-Miami in June, she was ready for the challenge. "I had been in prayer that whole month, and I came into that second weekend knowing that if I had enough support, I would be coming here." The congregation voted on June 18. "I said in my head that I needed 75 percent to feel good about staying, and I received 82 percent." Things fell into place. A couple at the church had a rental house across the street from the church they had been holding for her since her first interview. Sarah was installed on Aug. 27.

Two families left because they could not support a female youth pastor, but otherwise, the church has been overwhelmingly supportive, Sarah says. "Recently a number of people have come up to me after church and said, 'One month ago, we couldn't have supported you, but now we are so glad you are here,'" she says.

There have been challenges. "Sometimes I think that if I'd gone to seminary or had more life experience I'd be able to better lead this meeting or respond to this question, but I'm learning," she says. "I feel like I have learned more in the past four months than in the last four years of college." She says she hopes to go to seminary eventually.

According to alumni offices, Sarah is one of five 2006 graduates from Mennonite colleges and universities who have immediately gone on to work for a Mennonite congregation or church agency.

Colin Croynon, a 2006 graduate from Bluffton (Ohio) University, is a youth pastor at Holly Grove Mennonite Church in Westover, Md., where he works in conjunction with Rehobeth Presbyterian Church.

I had been in prayer that whole month, and I came into that second weekend knowing that if I had enough support, I would be coming here.—Sarah Rohrer

Jennifer Rupp from Pettisville, Ohio, is an administrative assistant and communications coordinator at Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes in Goshen, where she puts together the quarterly newsletter, does writing and designing, and updates the Web site.

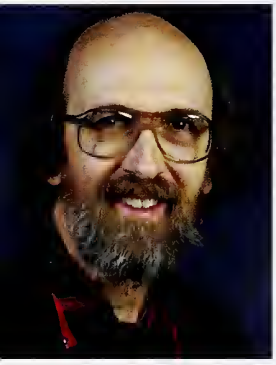
Rupp found the job in the "What's New" weekly newsletter put out by MCC, and thought it would be a good place to use her communications major from Goshen. "It was important for me to work at a place I believed in and felt comfortable with their mission—especially since I was going to promote the organization."

Bethany Nussbaum works as a development associate at Mennonite Mission Network in Goshen. She loves the fast-paced environment and the chance to talk to people about their stories about mission.

After graduating from Goshen in 2006, she knew she wanted to work for a Mennonite organization. "I just realized how important my Mennonite ties are to me, and how much I love the church. I've been surrounded by it and wanted to give back."

Sarah Roth is a senior at Goshen (Ind.) College and an intern for The Mennonite.

What belongs to God?



Titus Peachey is a member of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

On Aug. 6 and 9, 1945, U.S. planes dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing an estimated 100,000 men, women and children and severely injuring many more.

The human suffering in the stories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is painful and sobering for all who long for a peaceful world. For Christians, the story of Nagasaki carries an added tragic irony. Nagasaki was the site of the largest Christian community in Japan. Despite years of harsh persecution by imperial rule, thousands of Christians in Nagasaki lived and nurtured their faith in secret. Finally, in 1873, the persecution ended, and some 20,000 secret Christians emerged. These Christians built St. Mary's Cathedral, which became a landmark. At the time it was the largest Christian church in Asia.

On Aug. 9, 1945, a Christian U.S. bomber crew dropped an atomic bomb. Within seconds, the large Christian community in Nagasaki was vaporized. What the imperial government could not accomplish in 200 years of harsh rule, American Christendom did in one summer morning.

Father George Zabelka was the chaplain for the bombing crew that dropped the bomb on Nagasaki. On the 40th anniversary of the bombing in 1985, he offered these reflections on his role in the destruction of Nagasaki:

"As a Catholic chaplain I watched as the Boxcar, piloted by a good Irish Catholic pilot, dropped the bomb on Urakami Cathedral in Nagasaki, the center of Catholicism in Japan. I knew that St. Francis Xavier, centuries before, had brought the Catholic faith to Japan. I knew that schools, churches and religious orders were annihilated. Yet I said nothing.

"Now, brothers and sisters, on the anniversary of this terrible atrocity carried out by Christians, I must be the first to say that I made a terrible mistake. I was had by the father of lies. …

"Each of us becomes responsible for the crime of war by cooperating in its preparation and in its execution. This includes the military. This includes the making of weapons. And it includes paying for the weapons. There's no question about that. We have to realize we all become responsible. Silence, doing nothing, can be one of the greatest sins."

World War II was the first war paid for by a massive income tax that incorporated millions of new Americans into the tax structure. Since then, American tax dollars have funded wars and military actions in a host of countries, including the current "war on terror" in Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries. These wars have yielded mixed results in terms of U.S. interests, while causing incalculable human suffering across the decades.

Through the payment of taxes for war and participation in military actions, what have U.S. Christians destroyed in Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Libya, Kuwait, Iraq, Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Palestine, Colombia and Afghanistan? Have we snuffed out communities of faith that wanted support and fellowship? What opportunities for Christian unity and witness have we shattered? What emerging visions for reconciliation have yielded to bitterness and cynicism because U.S. Christians relinquish their dollars to fight America's wars? Have the seductive and violent powers of empire captured our allegiance?

Jesus and the disciples lived in a world of crucifixions, rebel uprisings and economic oppression. In this context, the question of ultimate allegiance came to Jesus one day in the form of a trick question: "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?" Rather than offer a simple yes or no, Jesus asked to see a coin. Once the image of Caesar on the coin was shown, Jesus told his hearers they had a decision to make: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's"(Luke 20:25 NIV).

Willard Swartley writes: "Jesus' reply pointed beyond the rights of Caesar to the rights of God. God's claim and Caesar's claims must never be put on the same level." During these days of paying our taxes, let us consider what belongs to God: our work, time, dollars, lives; the call to feed "enemies" who are hungry; the lives of all people in the Middle East caught up in a desperate struggle for life; our commitment to love and support our sister churches in Colombia; Christian and Muslim communities in Iraq and Afghanistan; U.S. soldiers at home and around the globe; all whose lives and minds are broken by war.

As we affirm that all these belong to God, can we who follow Jesus willingly give our tax dollars for war and killing? TM

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Six hours before my heart stopped**—Glen Miller

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Mennonites attend antiwar peace vigil

Christian Peace Witness draws thousands to Washington on March 16.

Several hundred Mennonites joined thousands of other Christians on March 16 to display continuing dissatisfaction and unrest with the war in Iraq. The Christian Peace Witness for Iraq was an ecumenical, Christian gathering to speak out against the war.

March 16 marked the fourth anniversary of the war in Iraq, and Christians—including Mennonites from 48 states—gathered in Washington to demonstrate the need for action and peace.

The vigil was a nonviolent and prayerful event. Activities spanning three days included workshops on nonviolence, a worship service at the National Cathedral, a candlelight procession to the White House, a prayer vigil and gatherings for individual Christian groups.

A snowy mixture of rain and sleet prevented some from attending. Four thousand of the 5,500 who were expected to participate attended despite difficult weather conditions.

Marilyn Rossiter from Kidron, Ohio, interpreted the weather as God showing that "a little suffering's OK. Somebody else said it's Satan taking our joy away, trying to put a stop to this, but I think it's God, because we're tough."

The National Cathedral was filled to capacity for the service and prayer vigil, so New York Avenue Presbyterian Church held the overflow.

The worship service consisted of reflective readings from contributors such as an Iraq war veteran and peacemaker, church leaders and Christian Peacemaker Teams participants, hymn-singing and a call to action from Jim Wallis of *Sojourners* magazine.

"America is not the hope and light of the world, Jesus Christ is," Wallis said as he stressed the theme of the nonviolent, prayerful, Christian-based demonstration.

Raphael G. Warnock from Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Martin Luther King Jr.'s former church, tied together racism, poverty and war in address during the service.

Electric candles illuminated the march at 9 p.m. from National Cathedral to the White House. Anyone who shouted a derogatory remark against President Bush or the U.S. government was quickly booed to silence.

Organizers distributed green armbands among Mennonites so they could identify each other during the procession to the White House.

Upon arrival at the White House, participants prayed for peace, and some circled the building, advocating a call for action. Some Mennonites participated in a nonviolent, civil disobedience act in front of the White House.

BLUFFTON University
SUPPORTS LIFE

Ellie Spaulding

Students from Bluffton (Ohio) University march to the White House on March 16 after a peace vigil at Washington Cathedral.

Susan Mark Landis, peace advocate for Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership and member of the steering committee for Christian Peace Witness for Iraq, explained why certain people chose to express their views through arrest.

"When a lot of people are willing to suffer—to give up their freedom for other people's freedom—the conscience of the country listens," Landis said.

On Saturday morning, ecumenical groups gathered throughout Washington to reflect on the previous evening and respond to the current situation.

At a Peace and Justice Support Network meeting held for Mennonites, Peter Dula, assistant professor of religions and culture at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., said there are two dangers Mennonites must be careful to avoid when contemplating the Iraq War. First, Mennonites cannot act as if nothing has changed over the years. Second, Mennonites cannot use the war as an excuse for cynicism.

There may not be . . . a political voice [for Mennonites], but there are such things as political tears, political prayers and political screams.—Peter Dula

Dula encouraged further antiwar participation from Mennonites, despite the United States' current politics.

"There may not be anything as a political voice [for Mennonites], but there are such things as political tears, political prayers and political screams," Dula said.—*Sarah Roth, a second-year student at Eastern Mennonite University*

Do we really believe in mutual aid? ask Mennonite Church USA leaders

In what one participant called "historic" and others referred to as "a justice issue," members of Mennonite USA's Executive Board (EB) and the Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) in meetings March 22-25 in Excelsior Springs, Mo., recommended working toward a plan for providing access to health-care insurance for all the denomination's pastors and church employees.

Glen Miller, manager of Mennonite Church USA's health-care access program, introduced a concept developed out of a meeting March 1-2 in Syracuse, Ind. (see story, page 22). In response to a concern expressed by delegates at Charlotte 2005 and a continuing problem for many congregations and conferences came a plan for providing access to health-care insurance for all Mennonite Church USA pastors and church employees.

Miller pointed out that "70 to 100 of our pastors are uninsured." While part of his work is to advocate for health-care access for every American, he asked, "How can we advocate for change unless we take care of our own?"

How can we advocate for change unless we take care of our own?
—Glen Miller

Karl Sommers of MMA (Mennonite Mutual Aid) presented an outline of a plan but added that details would have to be worked out later. To work, he said, it would require almost universal participation. In a typical population, 5 percent consume half the health-care costs, while half use only 3 percent of the costs. If much of that healthy half drop out, the plan becomes unworkable. But if everyone participates, he said, the plan is doable.

EB member Duane Oswald of Fresno, Calif., said that mandating such a plan "goes against our principles of voluntary association."

Nevertheless, the EB committed itself to "leading a churchwide initiative to explore basic health insurance coverage for all pastors and congregational employees. This effort will require the support and participation of area conferences, congregations, agencies and other churchwide entities. Our goal is to secure this cooperation in time for the health-care resolution to the San José 2007 Assembly."

The next day, March 23, EB members met with CLC, which includes leaders from the 21 area conferences in Mennonite Church USA as well as constituency groups and denominational agencies, and looked again at the plan for providing access to heath-care insurance for pastors and church employees.

Several conference ministers spoke about the critical need for such a plan. Wayne Hochstetler of Illinois Conference said he knows of pastors who would not be covered without such a plan. "Are we really committed to mutual aid?" he asked.

Dorothy Nickel Friesen of Western District Conference was even more pointed. She noted that some of the richest congregations are dropping out of the Mennonite Church USA-sponsored Covenant Mutual Benefit Plan. "This is a justice issue," she said. "This applies to antiracism," since many of the poorer congregations whose pastors are not insured are racial/ethnic.

She spoke of pastors who are leaving the pastorate because their congregations cannot pay for their health-care coverage. "A few Mennonites made a huge difference in the mental health field," Nickel Friesen said, "and we can do it again."

Mennonite Church USA executive director Jim Schrag reported that all the agencies have said they want either to join or cooperate with the plan.

CLC members discussed the plan in table groups and offered a variety of responses. One table said the finance people need to hear this. Another warned that the timing is too optimistic. Another said this is a discipleship issue, that congregations often renege on their employer responsibilities. A good plan will attract good pastors.

Several people raised concern about pastors in poorer congregations—many of them racial/ethnic—that do not pay a pastor more than a stipend, even though the pastor may work full-time. The plan as presented calls for supporting all church workers employed at least half-time. These people said that may need to change.

By the end of the three days of meetings, the group agreed to explore the viability of the plan further, including having conversations with some congregations in each conference.

The Executive Board is undertaking a six-year review of Mennonite Church USA mandated as part of the formation of the denomination. EB member Ed Rempel of Littleton, Colo., introduced

The calling and affirmation of women for leadership ministries

Acknowledging that many people "were disheartened by the narrowly defeated proposal by the Board of Bishops of Lancaster [Pa.] Mennonite Conference by the voting body of credentialed persons in the conference," the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board passed a statement at its March 21-22 meeting in Excelsior Springs, Mo., affirming women for leadership ministries.

The statement calls upon congregations "to consider the call and gifts of women for ministry on an equal plane of discernment with men." The statement goes on to call conferences "to encourage this view among congregations and to respect the discernment of congregations who call women to leadership ministries in the same manner as they have respected this call to men, by the same process of examination and granting the same credentials in licensing and ordination."—*Gordon Houser*

Mennonite Church USA Executive Board and Constituency Leaders Council members look at an insurance plan for all Mennonite Church USA pastors.

Paul Schrag

Meeting together: Mennonite Church USA Executive Board member Janeen Bertsche Johnson (left) of Elkhart, Ind., makes a point during discussions in table groups. At right is Constituency Leaders Council member Susan Sommer of Illinois Conference.

the results of a survey of Mennonite Church USA board members and workers about the formation and development of the denomination.

The survey identified 10 trends, which the CLC table groups discussed and responded to. One table felt the trends were more wishful thinking than descriptive. Another echoed this sentiment and asked, Can we celebrate diversity without having it?

Some saw the trends as good goals, such as one that said the denomination is "changing from defensive 'boundary maintenance' to differentiation through defining and strengthening its center," which is Jesus Christ.

A CLC task force report discussed at last fall's meeting (see Nov. 7, 2006, issue) went to the EB, then came back to CLC for further discussion. Among many comments came the sense that flexibility, not more structures, are needed. However, said one table, "We, especially conferences, are all understaffed and overworked, and [we] have so many layers and processes that flexibility is almost impossible."

The table added: "If we can't respond to congregations' needs, they will go elsewhere for their resources, and the more they do that, the more likely their theology will change."

The EB also asked CLC to respond to the membership guidelines. Several people offered thanks for how useful these guidelines have been for many conferences. CLC's consensus was to leave them as is and reevaluate them at a later time.

On March 24, EB members Kim Vu Friesen and Kevin Goertzen, and Executive Leadership staff member Iris de León-Hartshorn led CLC members in a session on antiracism. The goal was to obtain responses from table groups about needs, roles, tasks and objectives that will identify some practical steps for moving along the antiracism journey.

Marty Lehman and Jerry Kennell provided an update on the funding system of Mennonite Church USA and asked for feedback. They noted that congregations are giving less to the denomination, some because of increased costs of health care for pastors.

Gay Brunt Miller of Franconia Conference and Gilberto Flores, members of the Missional Church Strategy Planning Group, made a presentation to CLC. Flores, newly appointed denominational minister for Missional Church Advancement, told the story of his beginning a church in Guatemala.

"Anabaptist theology became a cornerstone, not an end," he said. He added that an Anabaptist approach can be missional. "It is a biblical approach, not a culture," he said.

Jim Schrag shared information about this summer's delegate assembly in San José, Calif. He reported that EB had received a resolution about the disciplining of congregations but decided instead to discuss congregational discernment.

EB also decided to reinstate the policies used at Charlotte 2005 about who is allowed exhibit space at San José 2007.

We, especially conferences, are all understaffed and overworked, and [we] have so many layers and processes that flexibility is almost impossible.—a CLC table group

In a special session that included time for prayer, CLC members heard from Lancaster Conference leaders about the narrowly defeated proposal by the Board of Bishops regarding women in leadership.

A CLC listening committee noted that the number of women leaders at CLC has diminished, which has caused concern.

CLC members shared stories from their conferences of church growth and the involvement of young adults.

CLC next meets Oct. 15-17 in Colorado Springs, Colo.—*Gordon Houser*

Group wants insurance for all pastors

Congregations would support MC USA plan for all, not just their own.

Insurance pools and area conferences met March 1-2 in Syracuse, Ind., to continue searching for a way to provide adequate health insurance for all pastors and congregational workers in Mennonite Church USA. The group's first meeting was Oct. 25-26, 2006, also in Syracuse.

The solution—building a vision for mutual aid sharing and for the kind of church Mennonite Church USA wants to become—will need to be broadly communicated among constituency prior to the churchwide Delegate Assembly July 2-7 in San José, Calif.

While representatives did not endorse a specific plan for health insurance for pastors, they did endorse a concept. That concept requires a basic shift in congregational thinking from finding a funding solution for health care independently to finding a solution as a corporate body.

"We have been trying to look at the relationship between our schools and having healthy pastors," said Marlin Groff, assistant superintendent for Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School representing the Associated Mennonite Schools and Camps medical plan.

"We want to share a commitment to our pastors, and we want to be part of something that is mutually beneficial," Groff said.

Congregations, area conferences and eventually delegates in San José will review a plan including preventive care, inpatient and outpatient major medical care, inpatient and outpatient mental health care and physician office visits, as well as life, accidental death and long-term disability insurance. Optional benefits for dental and vision and several prescription drug benefits will also be offered.

I am excited that Mennonite Church USA is planning to take care of its pastors in this way.—Jeff Miller

The two meetings are part of the response to Mennonite Church USA delegates at Charlotte 2005. A health-care access resolution and subsequent delegate discussion asked congregations to study the booklet, *Healing Healthcare* and said the most critical churchwide health-care concerns were becoming good stewards of our health, advocating for public policy changes and improving access to health care for pastors and church workers.

More than half the 935 congregations in Mennonite Church USA have less than 60 members. Small congregations frequently struggle to pay the premiums for health insurance for their pastors and families. This is particularly true for congregations in declining rural communities, racial/ethnic congregations and immigrant congregations in the inner city.

Those who participated at the meeting recognize pastoral leaders and church employees are vital to the future of Mennonite Church USA. The group encourages congregations to view pastors as part of their mission and not simply a part of administration and other routine expenses.

All congregations will be asked to participate in the program. Broader participation assures the spread of the total risk and cost and will make the plan affordable for all congregations.

Currently about 30 percent of pastors are insured in the Mennonite Church USA-sponsored program Covenant Mutual Benefit Plan (COMB). More than 5 percent of Mennonite pastors currently have no health-care insurance at all.

One meeting participant said it's important for the church to reaffirm its commitment to mutual aid and inspire congregations to see providing adequate health care for pastors as a shared journey—similar to a barn raising—where congregations are connected to each other and caring for each other's needs.

"I am optimistic that this plan has the potential to help my conference," said Don Bacher, treasurer for Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference. While his conference was not able to meet the 75 percent threshold initially required for COMB, the conference has been trying to develop a plan for premium assistance for its pastors—especially for some Hispanic pastors who currently have no insurance coverage.

Participants said the plan should encourage individuals to be good stewards of their health, which can significantly reduce overall health-care costs. Stewardship of health also includes an active plan for how people access the health-care system and make end-of-life decisions.

The group reviewed plans for insurance coverage proposed by MMA staff at the request of participants at the first meeting who called for modifications to support one plan for all pastors and congregational workers with flexibility in the deductible amount that is portable and applicable in all states.

"I am excited that Mennonite Church USA is planning to take care of its pastors in this way," said Jeff Miller, chief financial officer for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.—*Glen Miller for Mennonite Church USA*

Gather 'Round staff celebrates success

Feedback used to revise the new Christian education curriculum each year.

Courtesy photo

Greg and Pam Goering, of Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church near Inman, Kan., are part of a class using *Connect*, the *Gather 'Round* Bible study guide written for parents, caregivers and other interested adults.

Celebration, evaluation and planning were the focus at a *Gather 'Round* curriculum staff meeting Feb. 6-8. The team celebrated successful production and sales of the first three quarters. Many Mennonite and Church of the Brethren congregations are reporting good experiences with the curriculum, and several other denominations have chosen to promote the curriculum to their members. The staff paid special attention to feedback from users in evaluating and planning for the future.

"We were very grateful for those people who submitted an evaluation form after the first quarter or who contacted staff members by phone and email," said Anna Speicher, project director and editor. "These comments are helping us refine and improve the *Gather 'Round* products. Ongoing refinements are possible because *Gather 'Round* is produced new every year."

Speicher said people have responded especially positively to the emphasis on connecting church and home.

"We have received much affirmation for using the same Bible story for all age groups," Speicher said, "for the parent/caregiver guide [*Connect*], and for the at-home 'Talkabout.' These pieces help families connect on the Bible themes throughout the week."

Connect includes 13 weekly sessions on the same Bible texts that children and youth are studying, as well as daily devotions on parenting themes and ideas to help parents discuss faith issues with children and youth.

The staff received requests for more active options for the younger children and more alternatives for readers and nonreaders in the Primary unit, Speicher said.

"We'll be revising the Primary student book, the *Good News Reader*," Speicher said, "for the fall of 2007. We'll be adding more options in the teacher's guides as well."

Gather 'Round is a new Christian education curriculum jointly produced by Brethren Press and Mennonite Publishing Network, the publishing agency of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.—*Mennonite Publishing Network*

We have received much affirmation for using the same Bible story for all age groups. —Anna Speicher

Delegates to vote on ecumenical group

MC USA leadership groups affirm joining Christian Church Together.

With a yes vote to join the fledgling organization Christian Churches Together (CCT), Mennonite Church USA delegates to the San José Assembly in July will see themselves building relationships of trust and fellowship.

CCT began informally in 2001 out of a "deeply felt need to broaden and expand fellowship, unity and witness among the diverse expressions of Christian faith today," says a CCT news release. Formal formation of CCT occurred in February, when leaders from 36 church and national organizations, representing U.S. Christian groups, gathered in Pasadena, Calif.

CCT calls itself the "most inclusive fellowship of Christian churches and traditions in the USA." Among its participants are Evangelical, Pentecostal, Orthodox, Catholic, historic Protestant and racial/ethnic churches.

"Denominational leaders are spending time together brushing aside years of tension and differences," says André Gingerich Stoner, director of interchurch relations for Mennonite Church USA, "and cultivating relationships and trust."

For several years Stoner and Mennonite Church USA leaders Jim Schrag and Ron Byler have sat in on CCT meetings. At Charlotte 2005, Mennonite Church USA delegates encouraged church leaders to explore CCT membership. During the past year nearly all area Mennonite Church USA conferences, the Constituency Leaders Council and the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board have affirmed joining CCT.

"At this point CCT is primarily about building relationships among denominational leaders," Stoner says.—*June Krehbiel of Mennonite Church USA*

Women pastors report job satisfaction

Ministry style, balancing family needs, structural inequalities are main issues.

In a 1992 survey of Mennonite women pastors done by Renee Sauder, director of women in ministerial leadership for Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, Sauder said, "Beneath the surface was a deeply acculturated sense of inadequacy that left [women] open to self-doubt regarding their rightful place in ministry."

The majority of … women (82 percent) reported that they were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with their pastoral role. —Pamela S. Nath

Do Mennonite women ministers continue to suffer from the same self-doubt 15 years later? This was one question pursued through a 2005-2006 follow-up survey of U.S. and Canadian Mennonite women pastors.

The survey was mailed to a sample of male pastors as well, allowing for comparisons that were not available previously.

Findings from the current survey suggest that while women continue to face both structural and attitudinal gender inequalities within the church, many have moved beyond questions regarding the legitimacy of their call and fears of inadequacy and are focusing instead on finding ways to use their unique gifts and perspectives in the church.

Developing effective ministry styles: One-third of the women pastors responding to the survey identified the development of authentic and effective ministry styles as one of the top three challenges facing women in ministry.

The ministry style of women pastors responding to the survey is characterized by an emphasis on empowering congregations as opposed to a more hierarchical approach to leadership, and an emphasis on relationships rather than on ethical legalism.

Female pastors also express a strong desire for collaborative leadership arrangements. A number of women who serve in associate roles say they were attracted to this role because they want to work as part of a team.

Balancing ministry, family and self-care: Many women pastors who responded to the survey struggle to maintain a balance between pastoral responsibilities and family responsibilities. Approximately 48 percent of female survey respondents identified balance as one of the three greatest challenges facing women in ministry. Women pastors reported that this may be even more of a challenge for them than for male pastors, given the fact that women are often seen as primary caregivers in their families.

Structural and attitudinal gender inequalities: While indicators in the current survey suggest continuing improvement in the situation of women pastors since the 1992 survey, there are still signs of gender inequalities within the church. For example, while both men and women pastors described struggles with feelings of inadequacy regarding their ability to carry out the pastoral role and provided similar ratings of the strength of their doubts about entering the ministry, women were still more likely than men to describe external influences, such as questions raised by family, friends or church, as the source of their doubts. There are also some signs that women may sometimes be in associate or co-pastor positions less due to their own choice and instead because other roles are not available to them.

Responding to criticism: Given the resistance that female pastors sometimes face, it is not surprising that responding redemptively to critics of their ministry was another challenge identified by women ministers responding to the survey. Nineteen percent of pastors who responded to the survey (both male and female) reported that the church that called them experienced internal strife related to their calling.

Women who serve in ministry, however, must deal with different types of criticism than do men—criticism that relates not just to their actions but to central aspects of their identity like their gender—as well as criticism that comes from male colleagues.

The survey results also include good news regarding the job satisfaction experienced by both male and female pastors within the Mennonite church. The majority of both men (77 percent) and women (82 percent) reported that they were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with their pastoral role. Women's reports suggest an increase in satisfaction with their positions since the 1992 survey.
—Pamela S. Nath for Mennonite Church USA

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MC USA leaders visit Mexican border

Peace and Justice Support Network will tell migrant stories to the church.

Leo Hartshorn

Peace and Justice Support Network leaders listen to a devotion by Angel Valencia, a coordinator with Fronteras de Cristo, at the fence on the Mexico side of the border at Agua Prieta, Mexico.

The sun, heat and dust from dirt roads played tricks on the eyes of 10 members of the Peace and Justice Support Network (PJSN) of Mennonite Church USA speeding through the Arizona wilderness. But the migrants they watched cross the road in front of their van were no mirage.

By the time they reached the crossing point, the travelers had disappeared—probably hiding behind the scrub bushes that dotted the desert. Despite calls and pleas from those in the van, the migrants stayed hidden, probably in fear of someone, or something, halting their journeys toward jobs somewhere in the United States.

For four days in mid-February, the group of PJSN leaders learned from border ministries in southern Arizona and northern Mexico about immigration issues that affect not only churches in the Southwest but across the country.

"Immigration is a living issue, not only for our nation but in many of the communities we connect with," said Leo Hartshorn, ministry of peace and justice for Mennonite Mission Network with PJSN.

However, Hartshorn realizes not everyone can travel to the border on learning tours like this one. PJSN leadership hopes to be able to retell the stories they hear in the Southwest to audiences across the church. The peace and justice network will make immigration education a priority over the next three years.

Jodi Read, a Mennonite Central Committee worker, hosted the PJSN team and took them to a variety of ministries, including Fronteras de Cristo (Christ's Borders), a border ministry through the Mexican and United States Presbyterian churches that offers health assistance, ministry to families, a community center, mission education and small business loans; Café Justo (Just Coffee), a cooperative, fair-trade coffee ministry based in Chiapas, Mexico, with a roasting and packaging facility in Agua Prieta.

Just Coffee, Hartshorn said, is an alternative to northward migration. The company offers living wages to the growers and workers in Chiapas by selling the beans justly in the United States.

Melonie Buller of Columbus, Ohio, said a highlight was dining and hearing stories from five men at the Catholic rest center for migrants. The men told their stories—from injuries suffered on northbound trains to offers of cash if they, as illegal immigrants, would join the U.S. armed forces.

As the peace and justice contingent called out in the wilderness, they made a communal decision. They left a bag of food and the water they had carried with them by the side of the road, hoping the group would return to sate their hunger and thirst.

"There are hundreds that die out in the desert because you can't carry a lot of water with you," Hartshorn said. "That's a command of Christ—that you provide for the needs of others. A cup of water for the thirsty, that's the priority."

Peace and Justice Support Network is a partnership between the Mission Network and a network of volunteers. Leadership for the work is shared among Mission Network staff and volunteer leaders.—*Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network*

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Ted Grimsrud

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TED GRIMSRUD is Associate Professor of Theology and Peace Studies at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia, and an ordained minister in the Mennonite Church USA.

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CALENDAR

The **Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre** will hold a conference on the theme "***Inheriting John Howard Yoder: A New Generation Examines His Thought***," May 25-26, in Toronto. Registration deadline: May 15. For more information, see www.grebel.uwaterloo.ca/tmtc.

Stewardship Leaders Conference, June 7-8, 2007, in **Hartville, Ohio**. The first day is a golf scramble outing at Sable Creek Golf Course, costing only $15 (including dinner). The second day is the conference meetings at Hartville Mennonite Church, costing $59 (including lunch). Those who register by May 24 will receive a $10 discount on the conference meetings. To register, visit the educational resources page of MMA-online.org or call Carol Miller at 800-348-7468, Ext. 269.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Davis, Savannah Leigh, March 6, to Tom and Melissa McGuire Davis, Wauseon, Ohio.

Duerksen, Adriana Lee, Feb. 20, to Duane and Janna Adrian Duerksen, Newton, Kan.

Esbenshade, Myla Grace, Jan. 25, to Wade and Jennifer Keith Esbenshade, New Holland, Pa.

Friesen, Reed Cooper, Jan. 27, to Shannon and Carrie Penner Friesen, Newton, Kan.

Graber, Fiona Mirabel, Feb. 26, to Nathan and Amy Boller Graber, Iowa City, Iowa.

Greve, Madeline Eileen, Feb. 14, to Bret and Kathryn Graber Greve, Lake Park, Iowa.

Hostetler, Josephine Donna, March 10, to Todd and Dena Risner Hostetler, Bellefontaine, Ohio.

King, Tobin Maxwell, March 14, to Scott and Kelsey Reaver King, Wauseon, Ohio.

Nafziger, Julisa Faith, March 10, to Steve and Laura Kauffman Nafziger, Wauseon, Ohio.

Schrock, Noah Yoder, March 6, to Jon Schrock and Amanda Yoder, Indianapolis, Ind.

Snider, Colin Avery, March 11, to Shawn and Sarah Beachey Snider, Harrisonburg, Va.

Stucky, Jenna Jo, Feb. 25, to Nathan and Janel Jantz Stucky, Newton, Kan.

Yoder, Elliana Grace, March 14, to Kurt and Ruby Hershberger Yoder, Wooster, Ohio.

MARRIAGES

Blough/Winsor: Vania Blough, Hesston, Kan., and Michael Winsor, Goddard, Kan., March 17, at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Gingerich/Schrock: Garrett Gingerich, Sarasota, Fla., and Christen Schrock, Sarasota, Feb. 24, at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Harvey/Saner: Jennifer Harvey, Kalona, Iowa, and Kerry Saner, Elkhart, Ind., March 3, at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Hooley/Meyer: Sylvia Hooley, Canton, Ohio, and Nicholas Meyer, Kidron, Ohio, Dec. 23, 2006, at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Hummell/Stortz: Jack Hummell, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, and Darcey Stortz, Mt. Pleasant, Feb. 14, at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Mt. Pleasant.

Neuenschwander/Obri: Sara Neuenschwander, Kidron, Ohio, and Sunday Obri, Cross River, Plateau State, Nigeria, Jan. 13, at The Chapel of Faith, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.

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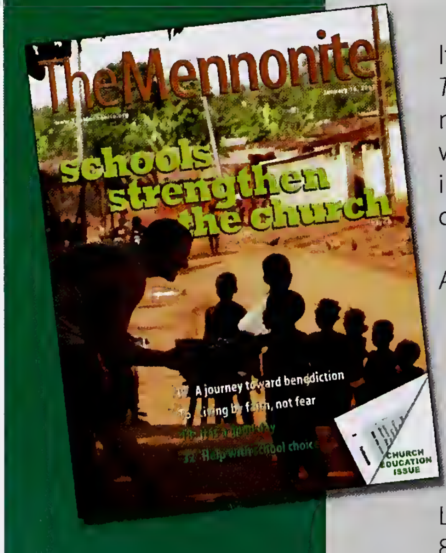
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DEATHS

Betts, David, 20, Bryan, Ohio, died March 2 from injuries sustained in a bus accident. Parents: Feroen John and Joy Ramseyer Betts. Siblings: Rachel Elizabeth Swackhamer, Sarah Ann Betts, Jacob James Betts. Funeral: March 9 at Bryan High School.

Burkholder, Dorothy Laing, 93, Pigeon, Michigan, died March 5. Spouse: Clarence Burkholder (deceased). Parents: Edward and Hazel Miller Laing. Child: Betty Shetler; two grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 10 at Crystal Springs Mennonite Church, Harper, Kan.

Chaple, Maria M. Ayala, 81, Hesston, Kan., died March 12. Spouse: Alberto Chaple (deceased). Parents: Mario and Mercedes Ayala. Child: Jeanne Chaple; one grandchild. Funeral: March 16 at Miller Funeral Home, Hesston.

Doerksen, Nettie, S. Neufeld, 93, Inman, Kan., died March 13. Spouse: Pete R. Doerksen (deceased). Parents: Henry F. and Agnes Schierling Neufeld. Children: Terry, James, Jan Woods; eight grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 16 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Epp, Paul F., 91, Newton, Kan., died Feb. 9, of pneumonia. Spouse: Ruth Schmidt Epp. Parents: Gerard and Cornelia Friesen Epp. Children: Verda Deckert, Weldon; five grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 13 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton.

Fauver, Sierra Lin, 17, Plain City, Ohio, died March 4, from injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Parents: Leonard and Theresa Casey Fauver. Siblings: Chelsea Fauver, Wesley. Funeral: March 7 at Jonathan Alder High School, Plain City.

Godshall, Horace B., Sr., 99, Morwood, Pa., died March 8. Spouse: Ruth Snyder Godshall (deceased). Parents: Sylvanus B. and Laura R. Barndt Godshall. Children: Marilyn Derstine, Horace B., Jr.; 12 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 12 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Franconia, Pa.

Hostetler, Gloria Grace Ebersole, 71, Louisville, Ohio, died March 7, of cancer. Spouse: Glenn Hostetler. Parents: Allen and Nellie Miller Ebersole. Children: Renee Hathaway, Mitch, Shannon; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 13 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

Hunsberger, Katherine Anne Nafziger, 74, Cambridge, Ont., died March 8 of Parkinson's disease and cancer. Spouse: David Leslie Hunsberger (deceased). Parents: Amos and Nancy Hunsberger. Children: Peter, Fred, Robert, Kristine Atkinson; three grandchildren. Funeral: March 12 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs, Ont.

Pankratz, Elsie Penner, 96, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 22. Spouse: Henry J. Pankratz (deceased). Parents: Abraham and Aganetha Balzer Penner. Children: Lenore Waltner, Louise Kreider, Barbara Fast, Stanley; 10 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 10 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

Rufenacht, Erma E. Beck, 98, Archbold, Ohio, died Feb. 24. Spouse: Reo Rufenacht (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Amanda Baer Beck. Children: Marilyn Yoder, Marlene Smucker, Dwayne; eight grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; two great-great grandchildren. Funeral: March 1 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Schafer, Vera Habeggar, 92, Bluffton, Ohio, died Feb. 21. Spouse: Glen Schafer (deceased). Parents: Henry and Mary Anne Zimmerly Habeggar. Child: Ann Reichenbach; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 26 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Shettler, Elda Stutzman, 70, Wellman, Iowa, died March 4. Spouse: Cecil Shettler. Parents: Manno and Maggie Erb Stutzman. Funeral: March 8 at Wellman Mennonite Church.

Sowers, Karen K. Mishler, 52, Goshen, Ind., died March 3. Parents: Stanley E. and Norma F. Yoder Mishler. Child: Shawn.

Slagell, Goldie E., 85, Goshen, Ind., died March 2. Parents: Joseph and Emma Schantz Slagell. Funeral: March 10 at The Gathering Place, Greencroft, Goshen.

Stoltzfus, Jason E., 75, Carlsbad, N.M., died Feb. 16. Spouse: Miriam Clymer Stoltzfus. Parents: Elmer and Sarah Glick Stoltzfus. Children: Winona Stoltzfus, Winifred, Bernice Moyers, Darlene Reesor, Carmen Ramirez; 15 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 20 at Carlsbad Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Duane Robert, 87, Kalona, Iowa, died March 6, of cancer. Spouse: Jeanette Miller Yoder. Parents: Lewis and Arvilla Gingerich Yoder. Children: Karen Harvey, Tom, Chuck; four grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

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Bethany Christian Schools in Goshen (grades 6-12; enrollment 285) invites applications for the full-time administrative position (11 months) of ***advancement director*** to begin in July 2007. Bachelor's degree required. Preference will be given to candidates with relevant experience, such as nonprofit fund-raising and marketing. To apply, submit a resumé and letter of application to principal Allan Dueck, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526 or akdueck@bethanycs.net.

***Director of ministry development*, Community Mennonite Fellowship**, Milton, Pa. He/she provides servant leadership to a team of skilled and motivated volunteer leaders of nine ministry departments, in a congregation of 275. Responsibilities include: leading ministries in visioning, implementation and evaluation; overseeing short-term ministry initiatives; promoting servant leadership in the congregation and linking volunteers to ministry needs. This full-time position requires excellent skills in organization, planning, motivation and communication, and a desire to make a difference for God. Prior experience and success in an organizational setting are essential. Send resumé to office@cmfmilton.org.

Associate pastor(s) sought by **Covenant Community Fellowship**, www.cc-fellowship.org, a Mennonite congregation of 175 founded in 1986 and located in Lansdale, Pa., 20 miles northwest of Philadelphia. Leadership responsibilities would include equipping/empowering volunteer lay directors with a primary focus on youth/young adults and secondary focus on children's ministries and contemporary worship/music. This full-time equivalent position(s) may be filled by one or more people. For more information, please contact dennisgehman@comcast.net.

***Director of youth and young adult ministries*, Community Mennonite Fellowship**, Milton, Pa. He/she will serve with skilled and motivated volunteers to lead and oversee junior high, senior high and young adult ministries. This full-time position, serving 60+ youth and young adults, requires strong experience and demonstrated ministry success and a desire to make a difference for God. Responsibilities include: serving, discipling, leading, planning, motivating and networking with students, volunteers, parents and young adults. Send resumé to office@cmfmilton.org.

***100th anniversary*. Lititz Mennonite Church**, 165 Front St., Lititz, PA 17543. Sat. p.m. to Sun. p.m. April 21-22. Saturday—self-guided walking tour. Lititz area history bus tour. Evening release of congregational history, author Alice W. Lapp. Sun. a.m. corporate remembering. Sermon by John L. Ruth. Lunch early afternoon hymn sing using the five hymnbooks 1907-2007. All welcome. Call 717-626-8237 or email lmc165@yahoo.com for details.

Bluffton (Ohio) University seeks applicants for the position of ***campus visit coordinator for the office of admissions***. This position has primary responsibility for development and oversight of the campus visit program. It requires excellent organizational skills, weekend and evening hours, and communication with prospective students and families. The candidate will be able to articulate and have an appreciation for the benefits of a Christian, liberal arts, residential university setting. A bachelor's degree is required. Specific information about this position and the search process is available at www.bluffton.edu/about/employment.

Portland Mennonite Church (www.portlandmennonite.org) is a growing, diverse congregation in an urban setting. We are seeking a ***full-time associate pastor*** to focus on strengthening the life and ministry of PMC by working in the areas of community life, outreach and adult Christian formation. Qualifications include a commitment to the theology of Mennonite Church USA, seminary training and demonstrated initiative, creativity and energy. Interested people should contact Marty Lowen, search committee chair at malowen@verizon.net or 971-219-2127. Applications accepted until April 27.

Central Christian School is seeking a ***full-time upper-level high school English teacher*** to begin August 2007. Central Christian School, Kidron, Ohio, www.ccscomets.org. Contact Henry Beun at 330-857-7311 or hbeun@ccscomets.org.

Mennonite Mission Network has an immediate full-time opening for ***director of marketing***. The ideal candidate will possess the ability to lead in the development, implementation and maintenance of an annual marketing plan and work in the Elkhart (Ind.) office. This person will oversee corporate communications and identity work as well as develop, analyze and refine an annual assessment of Mission Network's media mix. Additionally, he/she will lead bi-annual churchwide assembly preparations, represent Mission Network in congregations and other constituent groups as requested, participate in the spiritual life of the organization and in a local Mennonite Church USA congregation. A bachelor's degree in communications, public relations, marketing or a related field is preferred. Must be able to travel 20 to 40 days per year. Bilingual ability is a plus. Send cover letter and resumé to Mennonite Mission Network, Attn: Linda Krueger, P.O. Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515 or via email to www.staffrecruitment@mennonitemission.net.

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The department of nursing at **Goshen College** seeks applicants or nominations for a ***full-time professor in family nurse practitioner program and medical-surgical nursing***. Faculty responsibilities will begin in fall semester of 2007. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment.

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God's collective table

Regina Shands Stoltzfus is director of admissions and financial aid at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

A year ago, my mother, who lives in another state from me, was hospitalized. Within a couple of days, it was determined she would need surgery, which could not take place for nearly a week. The physicians did not want to release her for fear of further injury. I went to be with her, and to pass the time I asked my mother to tell me stories about her growing up in Florida. Many of the stories I knew, but I learned some new details about my mother's life and of my extended family.

Brand new information for me was the fact that my mother's people were migrant farm workers in central Florida. City girl that I am, I assumed I had no agricultural roots any deeper than my mother's flower garden in Cleveland. By the time my siblings and I were born, all the relatives we visited in Florida lived in the town that had crept up around them and vanquished the orange groves. Like my parents, some of my relatives left the south altogether for new opportunities. I am grateful they were allowed to seek and find these opportunities, though this did not come without struggle.

Each generation of each family has stories of how they came to be where they are. Some families stay in one place generation after generation; some move constantly, often not of their own desire but because of circumstances pushing them.

In the book of Deuteronomy is a condensed version of the larger story of God's people coming into being:

"When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God, you shall make this response before the Lord your God: 'A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an unstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey'" (Deuteronomy 26:4-9).

Our spiritual ancestors knew the horror of oppression and "placelessness"; built into their identity as God's people came the injunction not to be oppressors but in fact to welcome and care for those who had been oppressed, those who were without protectors, those without a place.

Our spiritual ancestors knew the horror of oppression and "placelessness"; built into their identity as God's people came the injunction not to be oppressors but in fact to welcome and care for those who had been oppressed, those who were without protectors, those without a place. A challenge and an opportunity for God's people throughout the ages is to live into the same identity.

As God's people today, how do we respond to current immigration raids, such as the ones that happened in New Bedford, Mass., in March that received national press but are happening in towns across the United States with seemingly little notice? Families were immediately and violently separated from one another, including nursing mothers from their infants. The disruption ripples out into entire communities. We are all affected.

As God's people who claim a heritage of peace and justice-making, some response is required, a response that understands justice-making as long-term, systematic action that differs from mere charity and challenges the myth of scarcity. I hope we remain connected to the idea of ourselves as related to each other through the family of God and seek to welcome all members of the family to God's collective table. TM

RESOURCES

A Field of Voices: Hymns for Worship by James E. Clemens and David Wright (Table Round Press, 2007, $9.95) is a collaboration of composer Clemens and poet Wright. The 30 hymns—a cappella and accompanied, unison to four-part—range from meditation to prayer to confession to praise. Each hymn includes background on its origin, context, theology and use in corporate worship.

Psalms by James H. Waltner (Herald Press, 2006, $34.99) is part of the Believers Church Bible Commentary Series. Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann writes that "Waltner reads the Psalms in and for the church and makes connections that will serve the pastoral, liturgical, devotional life of the church."

The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World by Miroslav Volf (Eerdmans, 2006, $22) proposes the radical idea that letting go of memories of atrocities and abuse—after a certain point and under certain conditions—may actually be the appropriate course of action.

Stewardship for All? Two Believers—One from a Poor Country and One from a Rich—Speak from Their Settings by Bedru Hussein and Lynn Miller (Good Books, 2007, $6.95) is by an Ethiopian and an American who discuss their thinking about stewardship based on their understandings of the Old and New Testaments and shaped by the cultures in which they live.

Politics Under God by John H. Redekop (Herald Press, 2007, $11.99) is a biblically focused consideration of church-state relations that weighs the challenges of political involvement for Christians.

Beyond the Law: Living the Sermon on the Mount by Philip K. Clemens (Herald Press, 2007, $16.99) considers that God's kingdom is based not on a code of law but on God's goodness and the bounteous love that God desires for the life of every Christian community.

Remembering My Grandparent: A Kid's Own Grief Workbook in the Christian Tradition by Nechama Liss-Levinson and Molly Phinney Baskette (SkyLight Paths, 2007, $16.99) provides a sensitive and practical resource that will help children ages 7-13 cope with the death of a loved one.

FoodBasket Toolkit (Mennonite Central Committee, 2006) explores hunger issues. It includes a four-session curriculum for youth and adults as well as activities for children. Both are based on the themes of food for today, tomorrow, for all and celebrating the gift of food. Also includes a DVD, storybook, giving calendar and stickers. For purchase or free loan at mccstore.org.

Blood-Letting, a poetry chapbook by Valerie Weaver-Zercher (Finishing Line Press, 2007, $14), includes poems based in the author's childhood memories in Africa and in her recent experiences as a mother. "Characterized by moral seriousness, vision, and lyric beauty, Weaver-Zercher's work explores the violence of love and the constancy of loss," writes Julia Kasdorf. Available from www.finishinglinepress.com. Weaver-Zercher is *The Mennonite*'s poetry consultant.

A Game As Old As Empire: The Secret World of Economic Hit Men and the Web of Global Corruption, edited by Steven Hiatt (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2007, $24.95), exposes the schemes and subterfuges of multinational corporations, governments, powerful individuals, financial institutions and quasi-governmental agencies. It includes a chapter by Kathleen Kern, a Christian Peacemaker Teams worker, on "Corporate Complicity in Congo's Wars."

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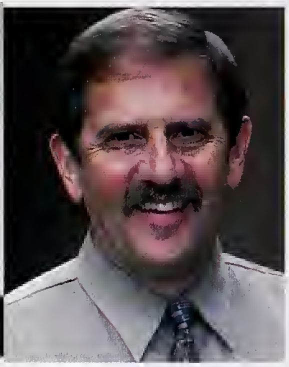

Everett J. Thomas

Love is our mandate

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.—John 13:34

Unlike most of those who responded to the most recent question on our Web site (page 5), Maundy Thursday has become a most meaningful time for me during Holy Week and Easter. That is because on that evening we celebrate the mandate Jesus gave us to love each other.

The evening that Jesus enjoyed his last supper with the disciples is called Maundy Thursday because of the new commandment he left with his disciples that evening ("Maundy" is related to the word "mandate"). The way Jesus demonstrated this love for his disciples was through foot washing—a physically intimate act that reminds us about this new commandment to love and humble ourselves before each other.

But what does it mean for Christians to love one another and to humble ourselves before each other?

It is easy for me to think about loving my brothers at College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., whose feet I may wash. But it becomes more difficult to apply Jesus' new commandment further than that. I admit that there are some members of Mennonite Church USA with whom I disagree and before whom I certainly don't want to humble myself. But how can I be obedient to Jesus' mandate if I don't?

On the way to the Easter season we remember that Jesus' final instructions were for us to love each other.

Then there are our Anabaptist and Mennonite brothers and sisters around the world that we are also commanded to love. What does it mean for us to love them when we don't even speak the same language and have different cultures?

This is just the beginning. Jesus' commandment requires all Christians to love each other. That means we not only love our sisters and brothers in the global Anabaptist family. We also must love Baptist and Methodist, Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox, Anglican and Adventist.

Maybe we need a new poster that says, "Let the Christians of the world resolve to love each other." Such loving one another would require a specific act: to humble ourselves before each other in a way that represents foot washing.

The chronology of events in John 13 is important for us to recount each Maundy Thursday. During this last supper, Jesus first washed all the disciples' feet before bidding his followers to love one another. Those feet he washed included Judas Iscariot's—even though Jesus knew Judas would betray him.

Jesus knew he was going to die. He also knew that his last words would be remembered as among the most important he spoke. So his final message focused on us. We wend our way through the chapters of Holy Week, and on to the Easter season we remember that Jesus' final instructions were for us to love each other. —*ejt*

The Easter season

Easter is not over when we leave our worship services on April 8. The church calendar—observed by the majority of Christians around the world—calls us to celebrate the season for seven weeks after Easter Sunday. At the conclusion of these 50 days we celebrate Pentecost (which means "50th day.")

The Resurrection we commemorate on Easter Sunday is the centerpiece of Christian faith. It deserves seven Sundays and is the longest season of the church year. Our cover story reminds us that from the tomb that first Easter morning God transformed the world forever.

We live on this side of the great divide that changed the way God's faithful understand life after this life. We do well to take seven weeks to celebrate what it means for us.—*ejt*

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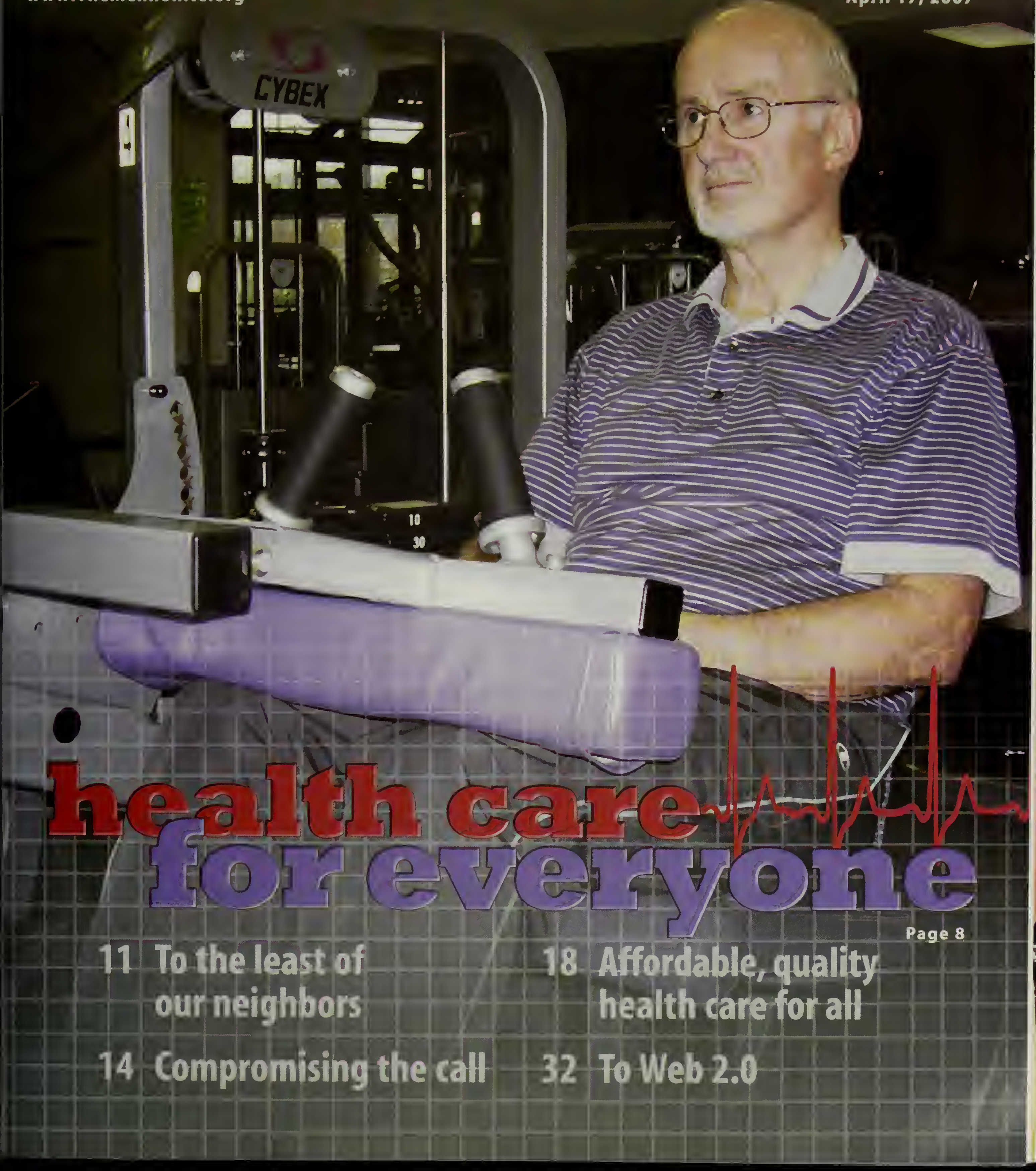

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Lust: illusion of love

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Lust is the bottomless craving for excitement. Lust is the drive for pleasure, particularly sexual pleasure, out of proportion to its worth. Lust is using the gift of imagination for illicit purposes. Lust is one of the seven deadly sins named in early Christian tradition.

Lust as illusion: Lust often pretends to be love. Lust has to do with me and what I'm getting. Love has to do with serving you and what you need. Too often people try so hard to love and be loved. Then they realize that what they thought was love was really about another trying to satisfy his or her lust. In the pursuit of love, they are betrayed, used and dishonored. Lust seems so close to love, yet even in its closeness it is painfully far away.

God created us sexual beings, male and female. God created us with sexual desires, first of all, to continue the human race. Second, God gave sex as a way of bonding and rebonding a husband and wife to create lifelong companionship and a stable family unit. This sexual union is joyous and pleasurable, but when we make pleasure the goal of sexual behavior, it becomes self-serving.

Lust as the denial of death: As wrinkles set in and tummies sag, we face our mortality. Some men go out and buy motorcycles or climb 14,000-foot peaks in a vain attempt to recapture youth. We easily get caught by the lust for sexual energy and conquest. "Are we still attractive?"

How can we combat and overcome lust?

Stop and consider the consequences. Lust is never satisfied. After the initial rush, it leaves emptiness. The next fantasy has to be more intense or bizarre to get the same rush.

The most significant consequence is grieving the Lord who redeems us. David's adulterous affair with Bathsheba "displeased the Lord" (2 Samuel 11:27).

Too many Christians think they can indulge in pornography or Internet chat rooms, and nobody is hurt. That's the lie of lust. It always affects somebody, and the first one it affects is God.

There are other consequences: inflicting untold hurt on our spouses, ruining our example and credibility with our children, bringing shame on the body of Christ, heaping endless difficulty on the one who was the object of our lust, creating a guilt hard to shake.

Commit to becoming free in Christ. In a letter to the editor in *The Mennonite*, Forrest L. Moyer described himself "as a young Mennonite man recovering from gender confusion and same-sex attraction." He wrote, "I want to state clearly that what young men and women in our position need is ... consistent, caring love and guidance as we die to ourselves and rise to new life and wholeness in Christ" (June 21, 2005).

Lust thrives on secrecy. Rarely are lustful behaviors halted without openness and accountability with at least one other person. King David needed the prophet Nathan. After Nathan's confrontation, David spoke the honest truth, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Samuel 12:13).

Until we confess that we are powerless to overcome lust, we will struggle with failure. We are powerless, but Christ is greater.

Commit to countercultural biblical values. Chastity is God's will for singleness; fidelity is God's will for marriage. If you make that commitment, you will be odd in your beliefs and behaviors. Get used to the idea of being odd or, as the Bible says, "not conformed to worldly values."

C. S. Lewis says it this way, "Virtue—even attempted virtue—brings light; indulgence brings fog" (*Mere Christianity*). Don't give in. Don't give up. Christ is greater.

TheMennonite

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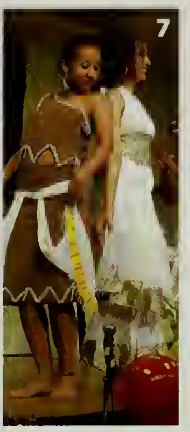
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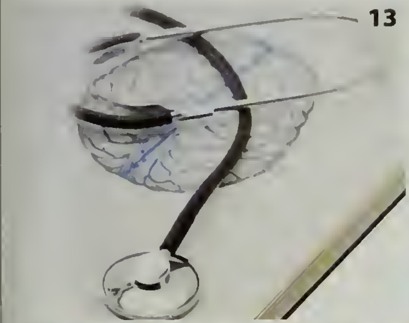
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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Insurance only for pastors?

Re Gordon Houser's report from the Constituency Leaders Council ("Do We Really Believe in Mutual Aid? Ask Mennonite Church USA Leaders," April 3): My question is, Why develop a health-care plan "just" for Mennonite church workers? This is a model like the U.S. government to cover all their employees with fantastic health plans while disregarding the general public.

What would happen if all Mennonite Church USA members became a part of a health plan? If this could be worked out, then maybe we would have a model to present to our American leaders?

A part of the plan should be a requirement to follow good personal health. If people do not follow the guidelines to eat better, exercise and other suggestions, they should not be able to be a part of the plan. In other words, many people in our country decide for themselves that they do not want to be healthy by the lifestyles they choose.

The rest of us who use the facilities of health care in small ways should not have to pay for people who wish to destroy their bodies.—*Wendell Schloneger, Orrville, Ohio*

Tithe to Global Church Sharing Fund

A priceless gift was given to us all by the Congolese Mennonites in sharing their stories of faith, hospitality and generosity ("Stories from Congo," March 20). I thank *The Mennonite* for sharing it broadly. I wonder if unmet "expectations in the parishes that Americans had come to give them money" were not because our brothers and sisters in Christ in the Congo assume that North American Mennonites are faithful to Scripture passages such as 1 John 3:17: "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?"

While we fret about creating dependency, families and communities and even whole societies are being destroyed by forced economic migration. The idea that our giving has to be relationally based is not congruent with the early generosity campaign between distant churches that we find described by Paul in his letters. For the early church, being part of the same body and family implied financial sharing. What if we all tithed 10 percent to the Global Church Sharing Fund of Mennonite World Conference as our remittance to economically struggling siblings in our family? —*Matthew Sears Kauffman,Tiskilwa, Ill.*

Votes have unequal value

It was disheartening to read Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference's report that the motion on ordaining women failed and that it was done with a two-thirds vote requirement ("Recommendation to Ordain Women Fails," Feb. 6). Good Mennonite brethren had again arranged for the potential unequal value of votes—giving those who said no a much greater value and depreciating the personhood of those who said yes. And so it happened.

It is in the nature of motions to call for a change. The stand-patters, the status quoers, those afraid of change always have a better chance for success when the comparative value of their vote is increased. It appears that Lancaster Mennonite Conference took a page out of U.S. Congress' book of "tricks."—*Al Albrecht, Goshen, Ind.*

Article reinforced stereotypes

Re "Not an Impossible Dream"(March 6): Luis Padilla has worked hard for what he has achieved and should feel proud. It is also a powerful testimony of his faith in God. I achieved his dream as well. However, I do not see it as an American dream or an Australian dream or any other type of dream. The dream that any person in the world should aim for is not to be successful in the eyes of others. No, it is an individual's dream, as opposed to the "American Dream" (after all, Padilla's dream started in Honduras).

I regard a person as successful if they are content shining shoes and have nothing in their bank account but are able to get together with friends and family and know they are loved. The way the story of Luis Padilla was presented reinforces the stereotype that success equals a college or univer-

IN THIS ISSUE

Delegates to the Mennonite Church USA assembly known as Charlotte 2005 called on all Mennonite Church USA members and institutions to commit "to promote health and access to health care." This issue of the *The Mennonite*—we call it our "health-care access issue"—is our contribution to the complicated and challenging tasks of responding to this call from our delegates. The first story by Glen Miller, program manager of Mennonite Church USA Healthcare Access, describes his gratitude for top-notch health care mixed with sorrow that the health care he received is not available to all U.S. citizens under age 65 (page 8). Stuart W. Showalter focuses on the efforts of one mental health care provider to provide help through a special fund. But, Showalter says, "in a health-care system oriented to justice, everyone would receive mental health-care benefits in a way that is consistent and fair" (page 11). Finally, seminary student Janet Elaine Rasmussen describes the tough choice she needed to make between preparing for pastoral ministry or quitting to work so she could have health insurance (page 14).—*Editor* sity degree. The only failure a person should feel is not using their God-given talents. I wonder how many people felt like a failure after reading this story?—*Eric Fels, Logan City, Australia*

Prisoner wants *The Mennonite*
I see that my subscription has expired. I received the former *The Mennonite* when it was a General Conference Mennonite Church publication and Gordon Houser was the editor. It was an excellent religious publication that broadly covered a lot of ground. It proselytized in a light-handed way—Mennonite style. When I started receiving it, my case was in the legal system. It still is.

For quite some time *The Mennonite* has not run those ads for readers to contribute to a fund to pay for prisoner subscriptions and for overseas mission workers. So I suspect such a program has been discontinued. At the same time, the retrograde Texas Prison System pays no wages for work and never has, which means few of the 160,000 prisoners can afford *The Mennonite*, and those few who can must obtain such funds from their relatives and friends. I would like to continue receiving *The Mennonite* if such a prisoner policy is still in effect.—*Michael J. Zani, Tennessee Colony, Texas*

Editors note: Those wishing to help provide subscriptions for prisoners or overseas mission workers may do so through the annual renewal form or by mailing a contribution to 1700 South Main St., Goshen, IN 46526 (designate to which fund you wish to contribute). Both funds are currently depleted.

Protecting our children
In the Feb. 6 Grace and Truth column, Anne Stuckey's observations struck a familiar chord for me ("Protecting Our Children from the Church"). Over the years I have had the opportunity to interact with many people, some of whom had grown up in the Mennonite church and others who were attracted to our peace position. Different individuals were grieved, wounded or appalled at how we speak about one another and treat one another. Ironically, in defense of our peace position, we have at times taken strong stands against any type of physical violence and, using Stuckey's words, "harmed each other with judgmental decisions and cutting words … and refused to listen to alternative viewpoints, narrowing the circle of people to which we are willing to give our love."

At times we have been verbally violent and unloving in the way we have treated one another.—*Keith Blank, Mountville, Pa.*

The myth of justified violence
Re "The Myth of Justified Violence," by Dennis Byler (Feb 20.): Thanks for carrying this perceptive, courageous statement. The implications for mission are enormous. Our mandate in mission is to call the world to a commitment to join the movement of the wounded Lamb rather than invite the world to join a movement that in the end will conquer evil with violence. Since means and end must be of the same essence, our missionary practices must coincide with the nonviolent Lamb's Way.—*Willis G. Horst, Formosa, Argentina*

Help with school choice
The Jan. 15 editorial "Help With School Choice" said, "Ten U.S. states, Puerto Rico and Ontario have Mennonite high schools." I kept reading hoping to find an explanation as to why Thomas mentioned Ontario only for Canada. Both Manitoba and British Colombia also have Mennonite high schools and possibly other provinces as well.
—*Lois Nickel, Winnipeg*

Editor's note: The schools mentioned are members of the Mennonite Schools Council, which relates to Mennonite Church USA. There are many other Mennonite schools in both countries that do not relate to our denomination through MSC.

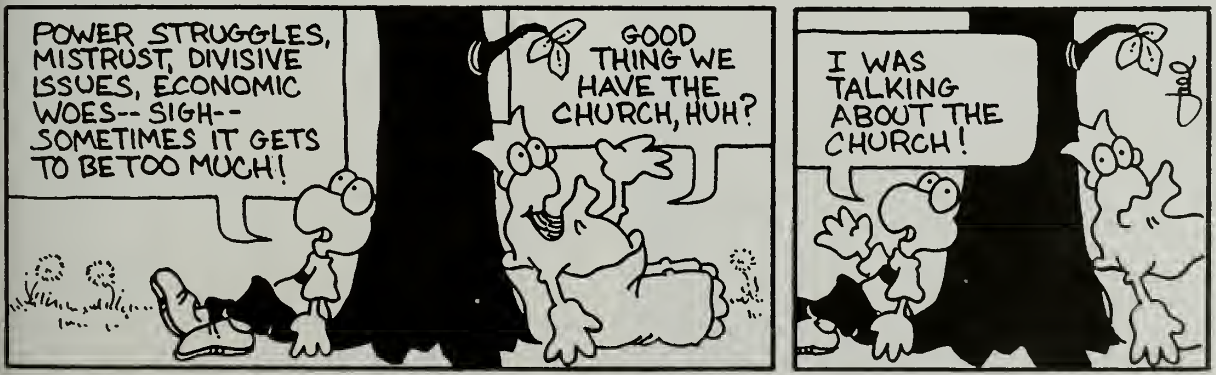
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Is it important for the church to provide every Mennonite Church USA pastor and church employee with health insurance? (61 votes)

○ Yes (75%)
○ Not in near future (3%)
○ No (13%)
○ Not sure (8%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


POWER STRUGGLES, MISTRUST, DIVISIVE ISSUES, ECONOMIC WOES-- SIGH-- SOMETIMES IT GETS TO BE TOO MUCH!
GOOD THING WE HAVE THE CHURCH, HUH?
I WAS TALKING ABOUT THE CHURCH!

IN BRIEF

CPT plans delegation to Colombia

CPT is planning an international delegation to Colombia May 23-June 5. Delegates will visit rural farming and fishing communities on the Opón River, where armed groups continue to operate. They will hear from displaced families in Barrancabermeja and meet with social organizations working for justice locally and nationally. The delegates will also have the opportunity to create and carry out a symbolic action in solidarity with the grass-roots struggle for justice and life with dignity in Colombia. An application is available at www.cpt.org/delegations/delegations.php.—*CPT*

EMU prof selected for summer study program

Lara L. Scott, associate professor of visual and communication arts at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., has been accepted into a summer seminar, "Biblical Studies Across the Curriculum: Discerning Scripture for the Disciplines," to be held July 9-27 at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich. Scott was among a small group of applicants accepted into the prestigious program that will focus on learning ways to read Scripture well and how to read it as scholars.—*EMU*

Former guerrilla soldier a Mennonite pastor

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam—Vietnamese Mennonite Pastor Hai (not his real name) is a small, wiry man whose cheerful smile belies a lifetime of struggles.

For 14 years he was a guerrilla soldier, then a policeman for 12 before he decided to seek the "Lord of Heaven" he had heard about. He left his life of force and violence, which included the persecution of Christians.

Not surprisingly, Hai faced harsh opposition from his former comrades in arms. He understands prison, painful physical abuse and extreme social pressure. But now life has other challenges. Hai shepherds three small Mennonite house churches north of Ho Chi Minh City, one which meets in the small front room of his frame-and-bamboo house, located behind a winding sandy path off the main road.

To minister in the other two congregations, he bikes over 20 miles with his wife, Thuy (not her real name), on the back. One group meets on Saturday, the other Sunday afternoon.

Hai and Thuy support themselves growing fruit and black pepper on their small plot of land. Because of his long service in the cause of the revolution and the struggle against the previous government and American military forces, Hai is entitled to a monthly pension from the government and a more substantial block or brick house. But by choosing to follow the Lord and become a pastor he forfeited these benefits.—*Eastern Mennonite Missions*

David Landis

Helping youth, young adults go to Nazareth

In July and August, Franconia Mennonite Conference will work with Mennonite Mission Network to offer a collaborative experience for youth and young adults at Nazareth Village (above) in Israel. This is the first such collaboration, and both parties hope that by working together a more effective and networked program can be developed for participants. David Landis, associate for communication and leadership cultivation for Franconia Conference, will serve as team leader. —*Franconia Mennonite Conference*

Amish school opens six months after tragedy

NICKEL MINES, Pa.—Exactly six months after a shooting rampage left five Amish schoolgirls dead, the doors opened April 2 at the New Hope Amish School, just a few hundred yards from where the shootings occurred.

The new school was built to replace the West Nickel Mines Amish School, where milk truck driver Charles Carl Roberts IV killed the girls and wounded five others on Oct. 2, 2006, before killing himself. The former school in Bart Township was demolished 10 days after the murders.

Herman Bontrager, spokesman for the Nickel Mines Accountability Committee, says the new school sits back from the road on a private farm, which Amish leaders hope will provide a measure of security some felt was lacking at the former school. Though discussed, other security measures, such as a telephone or alarm system, were not incorporated in the new school.

"The main precaution is its location on private property," Bontrager said April 2.

The school, which lacks electricity like most Amish-built structures, also has a steel door, which reports said could be locked from inside.

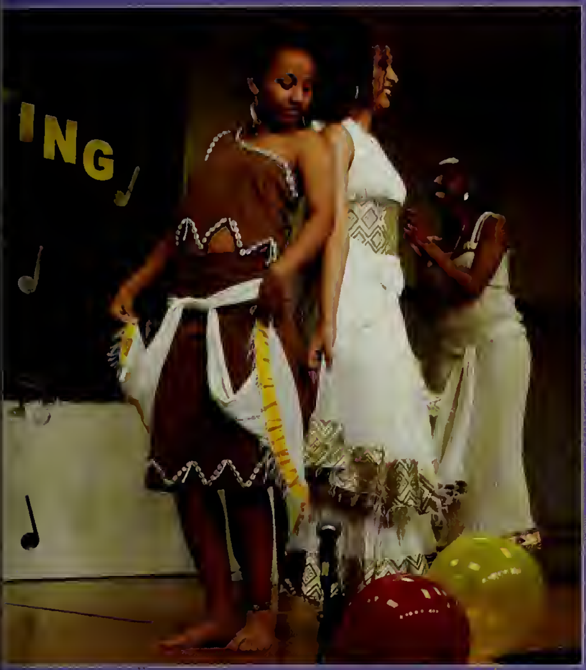
Bontrager said donations for the five wounded girls who survived the rampage have surpassed $4 million. Provisions are being made to ensure their continued medical and counseling treatment. —*Mennonite Weekly Review*

Hesston basketball team goes to prison

HESSTON, Kan.—Why would a college men's basketball team even consider playing a basketball team made up of medium-security prisoners?

Nine members of the Hesston College basketball team—accompanied by two coaches and faculty/staff members Kevin Wilder and Gary Oyer—found it challenging in several ways to scrimmage the eight-member squad at the Kansas Corrections Facility in Hutchinson, Kan., March 3. Both teams came to play, evidenced by the final score, a 64-61 overtime win by the Larks.

Garrett Yoder, a sophomore from Kalona, Iowa, and the other Lark players felt a bit intimidated after the prison doors clanged closed, especially when more than 200 prisoners in the recreation area got quiet and stared them down. Some prisoners whistled, while others made comments to the Lark players.



Larry Bartel

ston students celebrate music around the world

thel Gebrehiwot (left) and Bethlehem Aragaw, both fresh- from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, were among eight Ethiopian lents who danced to the song "My Motherland" during the annual International Student Festival March 29 at ston (Kan.) College. Following a meal of international ds from Colombia, Japan, China, Brazil, Indonesia, Ethiopia, a and Nepal, the international students performed vocal instrumental music and danced to the theme "Celebrating Music."—*Hesston College*

But that changed when they started playing basketball. "They're human just like us," Yoder says. "Everyone makes mistakes in life. You can't look at them as criminals. You try to look at the good and not be judgmental. You could see that we gave some of the players hope.

"They thanked us for coming, and we thanked them for a good practice time," he says. "They were positive and had good attitudes; I don't know if I could if I were in their shoes, being imprisoned for up to 15-20 years."—*Hesston College*

AICs celebrate 35 years of training in Africa

ACCRA, Ghana—In the past four decades, African Initiated Churches have moved from the periphery of the Christian world onto center stage. A crowd of about 400 gathered at Good News Theological College and Seminary Feb. 24 to celebrate this institution's 35-year legacy in training AIC leaders for their role in the transformation.

In the anniversary address, Abraham Akrong, senior research fellow of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana, noted that the African churches liberated Christianity from its captivity to Western values and taught the mainline denominations how to be African Christians. Those congregations demonstrated how to be African and Christian at the same time; both in worship forms, like dancing, and in spiritual values, such as acknowledging the reality of demons and employing spiritual gifts in the church.

Akrong dismissed the thesis that development and Africa are not compatible; he believes that just as the AICs liberated theology, now they must turn their attention to liberating development into truly African forms.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Joy Mennonite Church given advocacy award

WASHINGTON—The Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office has named Joy Mennonite Church in Oklahoma City this year's recipient of its Annual Congregational Advocacy Award. This award recognizes an Anabaptist congregation engaged in advocacy that is creative, persistent, pioneering and prophetic while maintaining core Anabaptist values.

Joy Mennonite Church, a 15- to 20-member congregation, provides peace education and military counseling to those thinking of military service and those rethinking their service. It is on the forefront of addressing conscientious objection, counter recruitment, military counseling and peace education. The church's Oklahoma Committee for Conscientious Objection (OCCO) initiative relies on members and supporters that include attorneys, professional counselors, social workers and computer consultants from the faith and activist community.

The congregation provides literature to schools, universities, civic events, libraries and churches, sharing with them agreements military recruiters presented to youth, biblical reflections on war and information that addresses what one can realistically expect out of military service.

James Branum, a member of Joy Mennonite and an attorney, receives two to three calls a week from soldiers at nearby Fort Sill preparing for or engaged in military service. Branum addresses a wide range of concerns from soldiers, from forming a conscience against participation in war to issues of mental and physical health.

Joy Mennonite relies on volunteers from diverse backgrounds to do its work. "It's not the size of the congregation it's the quality of the people," says Sadie Mast. "We try to incubate people to blossom where they are planted."

Award winners receive $500 to further strengthen their peace and justice witness.—*MCC*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Salsa dancing to prepare for prayer

As a unique way of preparing for an hour of prayer, the lively community of Christian believers in Puerta del Rebaño, Chile, engages in an hour of salsa dancing together every Wednesday night. The church, started by Carlos González, then professor of fine arts at the University of Concepción, has always regarded the arts as compatible with the life of the church and its activities. These dance classes before prayer hour "began as a practical application of a sermon I gave in a Sunday service on the body and its importance," says dance teacher Valentina Elgueta. In Chile's macho culture, spousal violence is all too common. Elgueta and several other women from her church offer workshops for women's groups to improve their self-image and view of the body, as well as workshops for the kind of self-abuse alcoholism wreaks—especially on men. *—Mennonite Church Canada*

MCC to celebrate 60 years of canning

On Aug. 11-12, former and current members of Mennonite Central Committee's canning crew, truckers and canning volunteers will gather in Syracuse, Ind., for a reunion to celebrate 60 years of work. For more information, contact Jennifer Rupp at 574-534-4133 or jrupp@mcc.org, or Tim Friesen at tf@mcc.org.—*MCC*

Six hours before my

by Glen E. Miller

In a few hours I was to have coronary bypass surgery—the sternum-splitting, heart-stopping operation to improve the circulation through my coronary arteries that supply the heart muscle with nourishing blood. I lay in the dimly lit hospital room when the nurse stopped by.

Following protocol, she asked, "Do you have any questions?"

Yes, I said, "can you tell me why I deserve this top-notch health care when so many millions don't even have access to basic care?" The nurse looked perplexed. This clearly was not the usual question about plans and procedures.

What had I done and who was I that expensive and superior care was available to me?

heart stopped

Basic health care should be available to everyone.

With a reassuring hand on her arm, I told her I didn't expect an answer.

But the question deserves an answer. What had I done and who was I that expensive and superior care was available to me? So many people lack ready access to basic health care. Eighteen thousand of them die needlessly every year. Mothers are forced to make choices between buying medicine and food for their children. To the parent of a sick child, there is the added anxiety that the rest of us don't face because we know how to find a doctor and medical help.

The short answer to my question is that I deserve health care because I am over 65. The Medicare bill of 1965 made that the law. The bill passed in part because 39 percent of senior citizens were living in poverty. Medicare and the provision of health-care benefits are a major reason the current poverty rate among seniors has fallen to 10.1 percent On the day I passed my 65th birthday, I was entitled to the national insurance program that provides health care. The law says so.

Then it hit me.

What I was entitled to at age 65, all other developed countries in the world grant to newborn babies and continue throughout their life. The United States alone does not view health care as a right of citizenship. Here, health care is available to those who can pay for it; for others it a struggle to find access to health care.

The contrast between the U.S. attitude to health care and other developed countries became real to me after two incidents.

Shingles: In 2003, Marilyn, my wife, and I went to serve as interim hosts at the London Mennonite Center. The day we arrived, the staff asked us to register at the local health clinic. The very next morning, Marilyn woke up with a painful swelling on the upper right side of her face. In several hours we saw the general practitioner, who immediately diagnosed shingles. Because of the possible involvement of her eye, we were sent to the specialist eye clinic in downtown London. Within three hours we saw two doctors and filled four prescriptions. At no time did anyone ask who was going to pay the bill or the identity of our insurance carrier. Because of the early diagnosis and treatment, Marilyn recovered quickly from a malady that can be painful and persistent.

Millions of Americans (and billions of people in Third World countries) lack an assured and ready access to even basic health care.

Contrast that experience with that of Irish friends accustomed to the British system of health care. They are living in America to study at a Mennonite seminary. The first week of school, their 7-year-old daughter fell off the monkey bars and broke her arm. Her father told me with some emotion, "When we went to the emergency room, before anyone asked what was wrong with my daughter, they demanded to know who was going to pay the bill."

I was amazed at the progress in the weeks following my surgery, walking a half mile a day within 10 days. I felt I had a "new lease on life." I am grateful for many things: that the surgery was available to me when I needed it, for the advancements that make this kind of surgery almost routine, for the caring and prayers of family and friends. In the midst of these good things, I try not to forget that many people who lack health-care access have not even a stable first lease on life.

Immediate and appropriate health care was available to me because I am covered under a comprehensive program, Medicare. Millions of Americans (and billions of people in Third World countries) lack an assured and ready access to even basic health care. Imagine my added anxiety, when acutely ill, if I did not know where to go for

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health care. Imagine a mother's anxiety who does not even know the name of a doctor she can go to for her sick child; or she may have been told she can be seen only if she pays prior to care. She will likely go to the emergency room and is then faced with the problem of finding a doctor who will accept her child as a patient for follow-up care.

Bankruptcies: Forty-eight million Americans lack any health-care insurance. Many others are underinsured. It is said that 150 million Americans are only one serious illness away from financial disaster. More than 50 percent of personal bankruptcies are related to medical bills. Our system of health care is based on employer-supplied health-care benefits. In recent years, escalating costs have forced employers to discontinue health-care benefits or transfer more of the costs to employees. Increasingly, private citizens and politicians alike are calling for some system of providing basic health care for all.

Jesus' words at the beginning and end of his ministry (Luke 4; Matthew 25) suggest that "care for one another" was essential to his message.

If health care is to become available to all, there will necessarily be limits. Society will not be able to afford to do everything that can be done medically for all people. Choices will need to be made about who is eligible for the most expensive forms of health care. Everyone is likely to agree that a 55-year-old father or mother of growing children deserves this kind of expensive care. But will a 74-year-old retired person be eligible for coronary bypass surgery? What if he is 84? Or 94? What if he is 74 and has been in and out of prison? What if he is 64 and has clear evidence of early Alzheimer's disease?

What about the tremendous cost of care for premature babies? The English health-care system is currently wrestling with the possibility of setting limits on when to provide the expensive care to premature newborns. They are considering setting a birth weight limit under which a child will not receive the intensive care necessary to sustain life. We may find this crass and unfeeling, but the huge expense of nursing these premature infants will go a long way toward providing quality care to all citizens, irrespective of the ability to pay. These are a small sampling of the difficult choices that need to be made.

Where will we look for guidelines that will inform these decisions?

As Anabaptist Christians, we look to the Bible for principles that may guide our decisions. We believe that as communities (whether congregational, local or national) we have responsibility to care for one another. Jesus' words at the beginning and end of his ministry (Luke 4; Matthew 25), when considered with his holistic ministry (spiritual, physical, mental) throughout the Galilean countryside, suggest that "care for one another" was essential to his message. This approach is summed up in Jesus' statement, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35).

The poor in our midst are the most vulnerable—the least—in our society. Jesus said, "Whatever you did for the least of these ... you did for me." As an Anabaptist Christian, what do these words of Jesus mean as related to health care? I believe I must do the following:

- assume responsibility to make healthy lifestyle choices, seeking ways to reduce the risk of accidents and disease and to reduce the cost of my own health care;
- support environmental changes that promote healthy communities and the need for clean air, clean water, nutritious food or places to exercise;
- support local initiatives that address the needs of those who lack access to quality health care, particularly the uninsured;
- actively promote equity in health care so that what is available to me is available to all—rich and poor alike—where risks and costs will be the responsibility of all.

It is still a source of wonder to me that a surgeon can split open my chest, stop my heart for several hours and put me back together again. Modern medicine has wrought wonders, prolonging life and bringing comfort not available when I started medical practice many years ago. I am grateful for Medicare, which took away any hassles over finances in considering what should be done. I yearn for the day when all Americans will have the same privileges.

Glen E. Miller, program manager of Mennonite Church USA Healthcare Access, had open heart surgery on Nov. 2, 2006.

To the least of our neighbors

The search for access to mental health care

by Stuart W. Showalter

Joe and Barbara Miller, a Mennonite married couple in Pennsylvania, always wanted children. The Millers (not their real names) received their first foster child when they were in their mid-30s. Eventually, three other foster children became a part of their household. Now in their 50s, the Millers last year welcomed two grandchildren as members of their family as well.

Along the way, as the children grew older, the family encountered a series of serious mental and behavioral problems. One teenager physically abused his sibling. Other children in the family needed intensive treatment for behavioral illnesses. These conflicts and illnesses took an emotional toll on Joe and Barbara, so they, too, sought mental health services for themselves. As if they had not endured enough pain, Barbara recently developed arthritis in her knees and ankles.

The Miller family has been supported by Joe's income, but his wages from a job in a manufacturing warehouse barely exceed the poverty level. The family has always wondered how they would stretch Joe's income to pay basic bills, much less the bills for mental health services not covered by insurance or state aid. For example, the cost of services for the foster children has been covered by medical assistance funds, but the same fund does not cover the cost of services for their grandchildren.

The family has always wondered how they would stretch Joe's income to pay basic bills, much less the bills for mental health services not covered by insurance or state aid.

For families like the Millers, the Caring Fund at Philhaven in Mt. Gretna, Pa., has been a godsend. Philhaven's contributors provide financial support for the Caring Fund. Eligible clients, determined on a case-by-case basis, may apply for support from this fund. Factors determining eligibility include being uninsured, underinsured or

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having exhausted benefits; an assessment of family income and extraordinary health-care expenses.

Philhaven, as an agency of the Lancaster (Pa.) Conference of Mennonite Church USA, offers a continuum of behavioral health-care services for residents from its region. Its philosophy is to develop treatment plans that integrate the psychological, biological, social and spiritual components of anyone needing mental health services. Philhaven's Caring Fund has made it possible for the Millers—the "working poor"—to receive services that helped them cope with the stress. For families unable to access services, increased stressors can result in greater dysfunction and even the break-up of the family.

In a given year one in four American adults—26.2 percent of everyone 18 years old and older—suffers from a diagnosable mental disorder.

While Philhaven's Caring Fund provided vital financial support for the Millers, the outcome for millions of other Americans who could benefit from treatment for serious mental disorders is not so hopeful. One cause for concern is the increasing number of people without any health insurance. The Census Bureau reports that 46.6 million residents are without coverage, rising in one year from 15.6 percent of Americans in 2004 to 15.9 percent in 2005. In addition, when individuals do have insurance, they may have to make higher co-payments for treating mental illness than they do for other illnesses. Sometimes insurance benefits for mental health can cover fewer visits when compared with coverage for other medical concerns. Other limitations can apply as well, including annual limits on inpatient treatment days and annual and lifetime ceilings for payments for mental health care.

The prevalence of mental disorders within society—and the church—is a given. The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that in a given year one in four American adults—26.2 percent of everyone 18 years old and older—suffers from a diagnosable mental disorder. NIMH adds that a serious mental disorder afflicts one in 17 adults annually. Further, serious mental disorders are the leading cause of disability for individuals ages 15-44, disrupting educational progress and productive work in the patients' prime years.

What are some implications for Mennonites?

Mennonites from all groups in the United States number roughly 320,000, with approximately 110,000 of these comprising the Mennonite Church USA membership. Extrapolating from the NIMH data, as many as 80,000 American Mennonites experience diagnosable mental illnesses annually, with 18,800 of these cases likely classified as serious. Extrapolating further, nearly 13,000 mentally ill Mennonites (80,000 x 15.9 percent) in America have no insurance to cover the cost of treatment. Those who do have insurance experience the frustrations associated with high co-pays, high deductibles and treatment limitations.

Mennonites, following their experiences as alternative service workers in mental hospitals during World War II, became pioneers in providing humane treatment for mental illnesses. They saw that simple caring and genuine love could help many of their patients move toward wholeness. Today 10 church-related organizations provide mental health services as part of MHS Alliance, which describes itself as "a community of Anabaptist health and human service ministries committed to God's work of healing and hope in Christ Jesus." These organizations include well established and highly respected treatment centers such as Philhaven and Penn Foundation in Pennsylvania, Brooklane in Maryland, Oaklawn in Indiana, Prairie View in Kansas and Kings View in California.

Like their secular counterparts, these organizations have seen costs rise, both for themselves as they provide services and for the patients who receive the care. Mennonite-related mental health organizations typically depend on payments for services from the patients' insurance provided as an employee benefit or from state funds. Emergency rooms at general hospitals are required by law to accept crisis cases, at least on a temporary basis. However, if the patient has no coverage to pay costs, hospitals are not obligated to continue services beyond short-term care.

In recent years, individuals needing mental health care have faced even more daunting challenges. LaVern Yutzy, chief executive officer of Philhaven, notes: "The advent of managed care in the early 1990s has resulted in significantly reduced margins for providers of mental health care. There is less ability to provide charity care than in the past, when operating income generated larger margins."

Yutzy continues: "The managed care era has also brought the creation of many levels of care, a positive development. Clients now stay shorter periods of time in inpatient services and make the transition more rapidly to community-based services. More funding now exists for these community services than in the past. Sometimes, however, the payors of services want clients to move to less intensive levels of care more quickly than health-care providers think is appropriate or safe."

Even the most caring of mental health institutions cannot meet the needs of everyone who seeks treatment. At Philhaven, for every patient admitted for inpatient services, two other patients are turned away. The reasons range from lack of space to not having the capacity to deal with certain types of cases, such as patients with significant medical problems or diagnoses linked primarily to drug and alcohol use. Yutzy says: "Inability to pay is certainly not the most frequent reason for denying access to services, but it can be a complicating factor. Finances sometimes become a major issue during service. An organization such as Philhaven could quickly become inundated with requests for charity care if we publicized the fact that we have a Caring Fund."

When Philhaven turns away potential clients, staff members attempt to find appropriate services for them elsewhere. Yutzy notes: "Someone who is transient or homeless might be referred to a general hospital, where they will remain until they are stabilized, since no one else can take them. Others, unfortunately, fall through the cracks in the mental-health-care system."

In a health-care system oriented to justice, everyone would receive mental-health-care benefits in a way that is consistent and fair. Such a system would enable providers to respond to the needs of their clients without regard for their ability to pay. Yutzy also advocates for "more education and prevention so that less money needs to be spent on treatment. Currently payors of services focus their resources on treatment, not education." Philhaven has launched a special gifts campaign in part to fund new education and prevention initiatives.

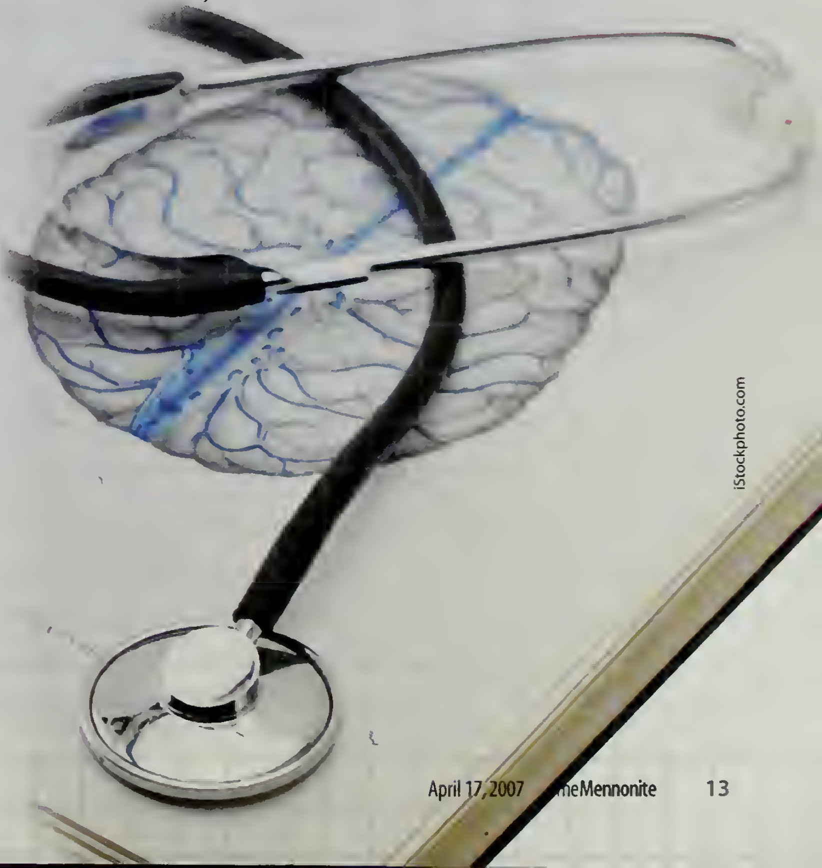
Meanwhile, Philhaven keeps exploring ways to create more access for clients needing care, including those without the ability to pay. Since its beginning in 1952, Philhaven has provided charity care, thanks to the generosity of donors. Staff members take extra steps to help eligible patients apply for medical assistance from state and county funds and devise deferred payment schedules. Also, therapists sometimes stretch out appointment schedules to enable patients to keep current with their account.

Philhaven has always maintained its relationship with Lancaster Mennonite Conference. Some congregations have provided direct financial support, sometimes for special programs, such as Recovery of Hope, which counsels couples in distress. Lancaster and Atlantic Coast conferences have contracted with Philhaven to provide an employee assistance program for pastors.

The challenge for the church is to devise the means for its members to access the care available and to be faithful in extending that care, as Jesus would do, to the least of our neighbors near and far.

Without a doubt, greater awareness of mental illnesses and decreasing stigma for seeking mental health services have resulted in more individuals wanting access to care. The challenge for the church is to devise the means for its members to access the care available and to be faithful in extending that care, as Jesus would do, to the least of our neighbors near and far.

Stuart W. Showalter is a communication consultant who lives in Kalamazoo, Mich.



iStockphoto.com

Mary Klassen

Harsh reality: From left: Nekeisha, Janet and Matthew Hickman, another student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Compromising

by Janet Elaine Rasmussen

The decision to attend seminary is a step of faith. Whether a recent college graduate or a seasoned professional, the seminary student responds to some combination of nudges from the Spirit and encouragement from the church.

These are the right dynamics for future pastors and church leaders to consider when engaging seminary studies. But practically speaking, other dynamics impact the decision and may prevent, delay or otherwise compromise the call. For students in the United States, the dilemma of health-care access has become such a barrier. My own experience and those of fellow students illustrate this unfortunate fact.

With a conviction that God was calling me to serve the church, I began full-time study at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind., in fall 2005, after a 30-year career in higher education. I resigned my leadership post, dramatically downsized my possessions and left a beloved Puget Sound landscape of mountains and saltwater.

Arriving at AMBS, I told everyone I would be staying for a year. I later learned that many older students frame their plans this way. In this season of life, we recognize the need to weigh our commitments carefully, particularly where financial security is concerned.

Seminary students face their own health-care coverage problems.

This coverage meant budgeting as much per month for health insurance as for housing.

Fortunately, I had access to continuing health insurance coverage through the university where I had been employed. Federal law mandates the availability of such ongoing coverage, known by the acronym COBRA, for those in transition between jobs. But this coverage is limited to 18 months, and all premium costs must be borne by the insured. In my case, this meant budgeting as much per month for health insurance as for housing. It also meant an assumption that I would need to be employed again, with benefits, by February 2007, so that I could maintain continuous insurance coverage.

he call

The 18-month COBRA timeframe is incompatible with a seminary degree program. A master's degree takes a minimum of two years, and the Master of Divinity typically requires a three-year, full-time commitment. I wanted to pursue a Master of Divinity but didn't want to be without reliable and affordable health care.

Couldn't I obtain health insurance through the seminary? As a freestanding seminary without an undergraduate population, AMBS currently has no group plan for students. But as a Mennonite seminary student, couldn't I get a plan through MMA (Mennonite Mutual Aid)? No group plan is available there either.

As I talked with other students, the harsh reality became clear—the typical choice is between compromising seminary studies and compromising health coverage. Without an employer to broker and manage a health insurance plan, I was faced with joining the ranks of the uninsured or trying to qualify for coverage through an individual insurance plan. Individual applicants are screened carefully for preexisting conditions, however, and frequently denied. The older you are, the riskier you are seen to be, and graduate students are by definition an older student population, many of whom have family obligations and/or are preparing for second careers.

These were daunting messages to receive alongside a deepening sense of call to ministry. The broken system of health-care access casts a shadow over the entire student body, putting people at risk in ways that run counter to Christian community. Here are a few examples from fellow students who agreed to share their stories publicly.

Last winter, Paula left her nonprofit job to study full-time. With grants, savings and loans, she is barely meeting school and living expenses. Like many others, she is doing without health insurance and has no financial safety net.

When Brad and Lici arrived at AMBS, they were expecting their first child. Pregnancy is considered a preexisting condition, and the fact of it rendered them ineligible for new insurance coverage. After exploring the options, they were eventually required to spend a substantial portion of their savings on a COBRA plan. Not until after their son was born healthy would health insurers again consider them.

Both Nekeisha and her husband intended to pursue seminary degrees. Nekeisha's husband planned to be a full-time student, while she planned also to work for their financial support. But Nekeisha had to abandon the option of a flexible part-time job. The need for health-care insurance for the two of them became an increasingly high priority, and full-time employment appeared the only route to such coverage. Much to Nekeisha's surprise, access to health care not only became a significant factor when deciding which job offer to accept but also determined the amount of attention she could devote to graduate study.

The broken system of health-care access casts a shadow over the entire student body, putting people at risk in ways that run counter to Christian community.

Diane serves as a full-time pastor of two churches and attends seminary part-time, driving a long distance to campus. Her ministry would have been strengthened by full-time study before answering her call to the pastorate, but she could not risk being without health coverage. She is nearing the completion of her M.Div. degree, which has taken nearly a decade. The splitting of her focus has made it difficult to be a fully present leader for her churches and also has cut her off from seminary life. Now only three years from retirement, she

Continued on page 16

Continued from page 15

wonders if the fruits of her seminary study can ever be given to the church in their fullness.

These stories illustrate the dampening effects of the health-care access crisis on emerging church leaders. Study programs and calls to ministry are compromised. The ethos of mutual responsibility that characterizes the body of Christ is put aside, while each person or family is asked to resolve individually their own health-care needs. Survey data from the AMBS student body suggest that both morale and enrollment patterns are directly affected by this issue.

A student task force, aided by AMBS faculty and staff, was formed to tackle the problem of health-care access for students. We began by placing our situation in the context of Mennonite Church USA's Healthcare Access initiative. Hopeful that solutions could emerge in solidarity with others, we pursued church-centered strategies. A three-pronged action plan emerged.

> **Paying attention to the health-care needs of seminary students is an integral part of the church's response to the needs of church workers.**

Providing health-care information and wellness programming for the student body proved a doable first emphasis. Next, we sought to establish a network of local health-care providers so that students and their families, whether insured or not, would know where to turn for quality medical care. Thanks to the generosity of several Mennonite doctors, AMBS students are being served by three Goshen-Elkhart clinics as of last fall. At two clinics, students join the regular patient rosters and are guaranteed a financial discount on services. The third clinic guarantees access to services for new, short-term and visiting students.

The provider network represents a major step forward in meeting seminarian needs. The physicians involved are sympathetic to student budgets and, within the constraints of available time, are committed to serving the seminary population. This network also has value for the Canadian students at AMBS, who are covered by their country's national health insurance but need somewhere to turn when illness strikes.

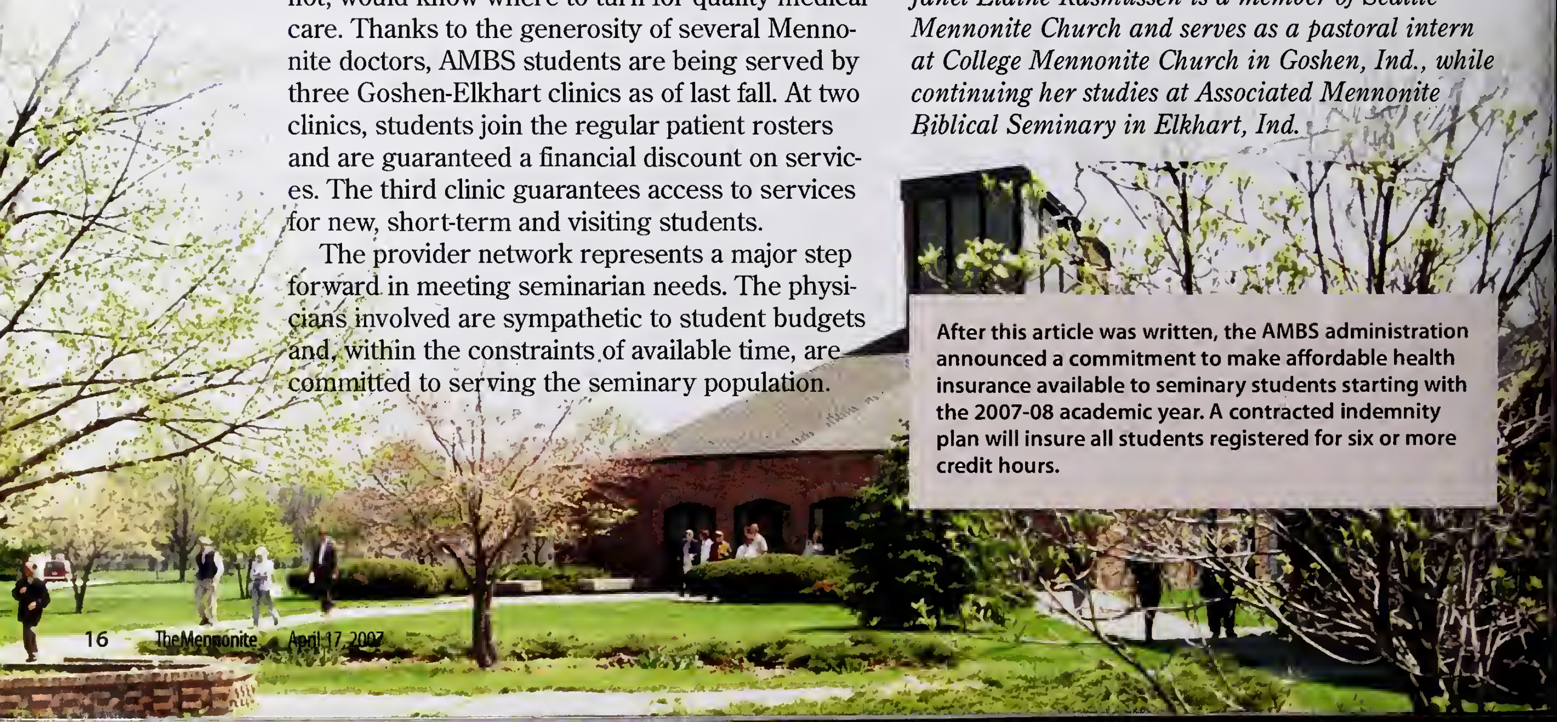
The third prong in our action plan relates to the development of a group health insurance plan for AMBS students. (See box below.)

Now formally enrolled in the M.Div. program, I recognize a critical crossroads in early 2007, by which time I must be covered by a new insurance plan. I ask God to grant me serenity even as I work proactively for a solution. I pray that Paula remains in good health until a plan emerges. I pray that Diane's gifts are tapped in their fullness and that Nekeisha's goals can be realized. And I pray that as Brad and Lici take up a call in ministry, their family's health care is seen as an ongoing priority by the congregation and conference they serve.

The church depends upon its leaders—pastors, mission workers, teachers and administrators—among them. The formal pipeline for these leaders begins with enrollment in seminary. Paying attention to the health-care needs of seminary students is thus an integral part of the church's response to the needs of church workers.

God has blessed the church with much talent and a legacy of compassion and concern for one another. What a difference it can make if a shalom vision informs how we address the health-care crisis and respond to the needs of all our sisters and brothers! May we bring our collective wisdom and resolve to this challenge.

Janet Elaine Rasmussen is a member of Seattle Mennonite Church and serves as a pastoral intern at College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., while continuing her studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.



After this article was written, the AMBS administration announced a commitment to make affordable health insurance available to seminary students starting with the 2007-08 academic year. A contracted indemnity plan will insure all students registered for six or more credit hours.

Spring, in any case

by Jeanne Lohmann

Spring won't be stopped,
not by our vanity and grief,
not by the blood on our hands.

Meanwhile, there's sun
at the window, and green
in the orchard trees.

Meanwhile, the tall evergreens
stand true to form, as if saying
we've been ready all along.

Jeanne Lohmann lives in Olympia, Wash.

An early Spring day

by John Grey

Not a leaf on a tree
but at least the snow is melted.
Some drizzle. A gray pause.
Father takes young fingers,
runs them down the lilac branch.
"Feel the buds," he says.
Or he lifts us to the window
where we can see
the first of the migratory birds
landing near the pond.
Weather's exposed for what it is,
the worst of it hanging around
like sin long after it's forgiven,
and the better is in the wings,
too shy to be warm and life-affirming.
On days like these,
my father must be proxy for the seasons.
Hard times have scarred his hands.
But you wouldn't know that
by the guiding, by the lifting.

John Grey lives in Providence, R.I.

Affordable, quality health care for all

Glen E. Miller is program manager for Mennonite Church USA Healthcare Access.

Sixteen months ago, Mennonite Church USA's Healthcare Access Program was a diagram of boxes and arrows. Since the last delegate assembly in July 2005, it has become names and faces, inquiries and reports spanning the country—from Virginia to Oregon and Ohio to Florida. More than 130 people have helped shape and implement the major components of the program outlined below and highlighted in bold letters.

Many of us know in a general way about the difficulties of access to health care for millions of our neighbors. About one in 10 congregations took part in an in-depth look at this issue through the *Healing Healthcare Study Guide*. Based on their study, 15 congregations responded with programs that are working to improve health-care access in their congregations and communities.

An estimated 70 to 100 Mennonite Church USA pastors and their families are among the 47 million Americans without health insurance. People from six insurance pools worked long hours to find a way to provide **health-care access for church workers** (see April 3, page 22). The solution to this problem will require denomination-wide support and participation. Encouragingly, the staffs of other Mennonite Church USA agencies have indicated an interest in forming a common insurance pool with pastors. Delegates should note that a recommendation for action that provides insurance for all pastors will be presented to the delegate assembly at San José 2007.

What we wish for our pastors, we wish for our neighbors. Government involvement will be necessary to provide basic health care for all. A project team for **health-care public policy advocacy** will bring statements to the San José delegate assembly outlining a basic theology of health care as well as five "talking points." These can be used to evaluate proposals for changes in the health-care system and to talk to our neighbors and legislators.

In these documents we state our belief that a biblically compatible health-care system will assure access to affordable, quality health care for all, without health and financial barriers. We also state: "We confess our own failure to act consistently upon these values. We commit ourselves, by God's grace, to do so more faithfully." We believe a starting point to act faithfully is the plan to provide insurance for pastors. It is inconsistent to advocate to government for care for all and ignore our pastors who lack the means to access because their church cannot afford insurance.

There are more than 70 health-care provider institutions affiliated with Mennonite Health Services Alliance. These agencies feel the pressure of increasing demands for services in the face of diminishing sources of finance. The **institutional initiative** of the health-care access program brought together congregations, conference leaders and institutional representatives to promote collaboration to better serve their constituencies.

Stewardship of health applies to individuals and local church communities. As we apply wellness principles individually, we improve quality of life and prospects for a longer life. In our congregations we can support each other to healthier living; from the kind of food we bring to potluck dinners to support for end-of-life decisions. Through the consideration of stewardship of health, some congregations are coming to grips with a redefinition that includes all of health: spiritual, physical, mental and emotional. MMA (Mennonite Mutual Aid) is leading this effort.

Congregational responses to the *Healing Healthcare* study include education in wellness, support for end-of-life decisions, volunteer work in clinics for the uninsured and many other applications. Among these volunteers are health professionals who are working in meaningful ways in local congregations, conferences and planning committees.

The full impact of the health-care access program will require several years to evaluate. I hope that in several years we will look back on the health-care access program as having made a difference in the lives of individuals, congregations and the denomination.

As people of compassion, Mennonites are responding in many ways to those who suffer from a lack of health-care access. Those who lack access to health care are among the most vulnerable in our society. Willard Swartley writes in *Healing Healthcare*, "When we consider Jesus' teaching and the social, economic and political profile of the people he healed, we must conclude that exclusionary policies in health care are wrong." TM

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **A mother's hands, a mother's heart**—Carmen Schrock-Hurst
- **Blessed hunger, extravagant grace**—Margalea Warner

Bluffton baseball team returns to diamond

Over 1,200 spectators and 100 media outlets are present at season opener.

Four weeks after a bus accident claimed the lives of five student-athletes, the Bluffton (Ohio) University baseball team continued the healing process by beginning its season at home on March 30 versus conference-foe College of Mount St. Joseph from Cincinnati.

Family, friends and supporters arrived in droves, spreading out blankets and folding chairs. By all accounts it looked like an ordinary game day, with children running around, hotdogs and brats on the grill and people chatting.

Five white banners lining the left-field fence waved in the breeze, reminding all present that from here on out, "ordinary" would always be a relative term.

In front of more than 1,200 spectators and 100 media outlets, the Beavers took the field after a moment of silence and a prayer by Bluffton president James M. Harder. The team sported black jerseys in honor of their teammates.

James Grandey, head coach, unable to physically be in the dugout due to his injuries, sat in the press box, coaching his team from a stone's throw away.

When junior Tim Kay, Alpharetta, Ga., threw a strike on the first pitch, the crowd leapt to its feet and erupted in cheers, collectively realizing that baseball was back at Bluffton.

Unable to hold onto an early 3-1 lead, Bluffton lost the first game of the three-game weekend series, 10-5. Despite the loss, the day as a whole was nothing short of a win.

"It's disappointing to lose," said Ryan Baightel, Wapakoneta, Ohio, after the game. "Any day you want to win, but when a crowd like this comes out, you want to win for them. But I think it's a win to be back on the field. That's enough."

"The best thing that could've happened to this program at this time is for us to play today. We're a Division III school [which doesn't grant athletic scholarships], and yes, the guys came here for academics, but our 40 guys came here to play baseball, too. It's about baseball for them. And it's about healing; they need to get out and do what they love and honor the players we lost," said Grandey.

On March 31, the Beavers earned their first win of the season versus the Lions of Mount St. Joseph, 7-6. They fell to the Lions 7-6 in the second game of the day.

The Bluffton baseball team was on its way to Sarasota, Fla., on March 2 to play a doubleheader with Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., when its bus toppled over an overpass onto the highway below.

Burton Andrews

Corey Conn, London, Ohio, swings at a pitch in front of a large crowd gathered to support the Bluffton Beavers' opening game of the season.

Four student-athletes, the bus driver and the bus driver's wife were killed in the accident. A fifth student-athlete died a week later (See "Bluffton University Mourns Seven Deaths," March 20).

The deceased include Bluffton students Zachary Arend (Oakwood, Ohio); Tyler Williams (Lima, Ohio); David Betts (Bryan, Ohio); Scott Harmon (Lima, Ohio) and Cody Holp (Arcanum, Ohio); the bus driver, Jerome Niemeyer, and his wife, Jean Niemeyer, both of Columbus Grove, Ohio.

> **The best thing that could've happened to this program at this time is for us to play today . . . they need to get out and do what they love and honor the players we lost.**—James Grandey

Contributions to funds for the players and their families have surpassed $80,000.

Donations are still being accepted for a memorial that will be established at a later date.

For more information about the baseball team, visit www.bluffton.edu.—*Jill A. Duling of Bluffton University*

A new church, The Table, meets at EMU

A message of gathering 'at the table' brings together students and older adults.

Small groups, reflection, interaction, sharing meals and artistic expression usually describe what happens in a Sunday school class, not in a church worship service.

But at The Table, a new church located on the Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) campus in Harrisonburg, Va., these activities are a regular part of the worship service.

"This church grew out of a desire for more genuine worship and relationships at the core of the church," says Sara Wenger Shenk, associate dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary and member of The Table leadership team.

"There are several aspects of the idea of a table that interested us," Shenk says. "There's the table of the Lord's Supper, sitting 'at tables' in a way that allows genuine conversation and questions, and sitting at each other's tables in our homes to enjoy good food. We gather 'at the table' to give thanks to God, often with music and song that includes rhythm and dance."

I like how worship flows into a gathered meal together. —Mike Metzler

Each Sunday, following a brief message from Scripture, everyone is invited to gather in "circle groups" for discussion or to meditate silently or even draw a picture of their thoughts from the morning. Then the group regathers for people to share what they have heard.

Chris Esh, an EMU freshman, attended The Table for the first time on March 18.

"I really like the after-sermon response time," he says. "My home church has sermon response, but it's more like, if you have anything to say, stand up and say it. You don't take time to really think through the message.

Laura Lehman Amstutz

Katie Derstine and an Eastern Mennonite University student draw during the reflection and discussion time.

"At The Table, through discussion, I was able to wrestle with issues a little more and find more importance in it than if I just stood up and said something," Esh adds.

The Table began in January. Four couples have primary leadership of the church.

Carmen Schrock-Hurst of the core leadership team says: "We joke about there being a couple in their 20s, one in their 30s, one in their 40s and one in their 50s on the leadership team. But this diversity of ages provides an opportunity for creativity and flexibility."

"I like that The Table incorporates multiple ways of learning, through experience of the Scriptures, listening, speaking back and seeing visually what the Scriptures are about," says Mike Metzler, a first-year student at Eastern Mennonite Seminary and member of the worship team. "As a former teacher, I can appreciate that people learn in different ways, and I like that we incorporate all these styles into the service."

On many Sundays, the group celebrates the Lord's Supper, but they also gather at designated host homes after the service for a meal.

"I like how worship flows into a gathered meal together," Metzler says. "We come together for worship, but that worship spills over into gathering around a real meal that is an extension of the worship time."

The Table meets at 10:30 a.m. Sundays in the Discipleship Center on the EMU campus. To learn more about the church, visit www.thetablefellowship.net.—*Laura Lehman Amstutz of Eastern Mennonite University*

bevisionary

"At EMU I was able to explore my interests without the pressures of a 'prestigious' school, and then I had the opportunity to pick from among the best law schools in the country. The hard part now is deciding which of my top five choices to attend!"

Lindsay Martin, '05
justice, peace and conflict studies
and economics major

Lindsay is juggling invitations and scholarship offers to study law at Georgetown, Duke, Berkeley, NYU and University of Pennsylvania.

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EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY
Harrisonburg, VA

Spanish-language program debuts

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary provides one-year certificate.

For two intense weekends in the fall of 2006, more than a dozen pastors of Hispanic Mennonite congregations converged upon the Mennonite community in Dallas, Texas, to begin graduate-level theological studies at the Seminario Bíblico Anabautista.

The Spanish-language pilot program, a project of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., is an attempt to provide theological education to pastors whose fluency in English and ministerial responsibilities makes a full-time graduate degree at AMBS next to impossible.

The Seminario offers a certificate in theological studies equivalent to the one-year certificate offered at AMBS, but the "certificado" course of study is presented in Spanish, on site in Texas.

Loren Johns, academic dean at AMBS, says, "The Hispanic church is the growing edge of the Mennonite church, so it is absolutely essential, if AMBS wants to be a part of tomorrow's Mennonite church, to connect with and prove to be of some use to the Hispanic church. This program brings us to the table."

Johns sees the Seminario as one way that AMBS faculty and administration are trying to reimagine theological education in order to engage and empower a broader spectrum of the constituency.

To strengthen those connections, two AMBS Bible professors, Jacob Elias and Steven Schweitzer, met with the class during its second session.

Esther Martinez, executive director of the Dallas-based Learning Leadership Institute, coordinator for Church Plant Support and a church planter, is one of the students in the first cohort of the Seminario.

"Our pastors are bivocational, so it is hard to travel," she says. "They work six days out of the week, and on the seventh day they have church."

The first cohort of students is a diverse group, originating from a number of countries in Latin America and ranging in educational background from pre-high school to some previous seminary education. The common ground is their leadership roles in Hispanic Mennonite churches.

The Seminario was launched with support from the Schowalter Foundation, Hesston, Kan., and AMBS's Engaging Pastors program, which brings pastors and professors together for collaboration, learning and support.

Engaging Pastors provided the funding for Elias and Schweitzer to join the Hispanic pastors for the second class session.—*Heidi Siemens-Rhodes for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary*

Rafael Barahona

A Spanish-language seminary course meets in Dallas with John Driver instructing.

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'Young democracy threatened' in street fighting in Kinshasa that lasts two days

What exactly took place in Kinshasa March 22-23? The people of Democratic Republic of Congo, through last year's elections, had just provided the country with a new political structure and institutions.

People were eager to participate in and protect the newborn democracy in order to support national reconstruction. Unfortunately, from the time the results of the final round of the October 2006 presidential vote were announced, Jean Pierre Bemba, a former vice president who lost the election to Joseph Kabila, was unwilling to accept his defeat.

Bemba was later elected National Senator and decided to lead a "republican opposition."

While the government and the United Nations called for all the military groups related to different rebel leaders to integrate the national army, Bemba, with a significant number of soldiers in Kinshasa and elsewhere, asked the government to allow him to keep 500 to assure his personal security.

The national government gave a deadline for all rebel military groups to be integrated into the regular army. However, the former vice president refused to respect this government deadline.

Three days prior to the confrontation, Bemba delivered on his privately owned television channel a provocative and at times discourteous speech attacking the president, the prime minister and the chief of staff of the national army.

His speech, which purported to be "in the cause of truth," increased the ire of the authorities, whom Bemba characterized as inept and unable to defeat him.

It was against this background that on the morning of March 22 the head of the Congolese Armed Forces deployed troops that were already in position for a face-off with Bemba's military. At about 10:45 a.m. the first shots were fired in the middle of the commune of Gombe.

Gombe is located in the middle of Kinshasa and is the location of many of the key institutions of the capital. Offices, markets, elite schools and embassies are located there.

No advance warning was given to the general population to leave the conflict zone. I was about 20 meters from Mandela Square on the way to the

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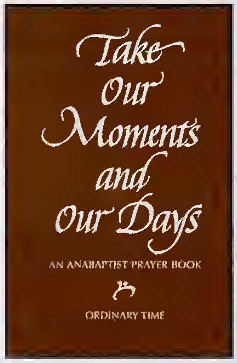

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More than 100 killed and 200 injured during fighting in Congo's capital; conflict occurs near Mennonite Central Committee's office in Kinshasa

central market, where the conflict began. The street fight lasted two days and produced tragic results. Though the number of casualties is contested, most agree that well more than 100 were killed and 200 wounded.

Our Mennonite Central Committee colleague, Suzanne Lind, was trapped in her office for two days. When I reached her by telephone, she reported that she still had some water and that a neighbor woman had brought her an egg to eat. She was not able to return to her apartment from Gombe.

The primary and secondary school students of Boboto and Bosanga schools were unable to leave their schools for three days. The administrators of the central bank and many other office workers suffered the same fate.

In Kinshasa, where so many people live from hand to mouth, it is essential that the average citizen be able to move around the city in order to find what is needed to survive. Thus, being unable to circulate is a major hardship, particularly for the poor.

The young democracy is once again threatened. Many who saw Bemba's military as a public danger are satisfied to see it neutralized.

While I do not believe weapons are the best way to find solutions to problems, the lack of acceptance of defeat and lack of openness of the former vice president was a real problem.

Peace in the Congo has been constructed at considerable cost by church and civil society workers. The looting of stores and shops and the raping and killing by men in uniform must be stopped. After these acts are carried out, the misery suffered by the people is only more profound.

Our challenge is to continue the peace-building process in Congo and to continue rebuilding our country. The institutional structures of the country have been put in place, but it will take time for them to take control.

We will remain vigilant to protect what has been achieved at considerable cost. I have given much energy and effort to building peace in Congo. We must not allow the destruction of these efforts through violence in a country where the population lives in abject misery.—*Mukambu Ya'Namwisi Eric for Mennonite World Conference*

Our challenge is to continue the peace-building process in Congo.
—Mukambu Ya'Namwisi Eric

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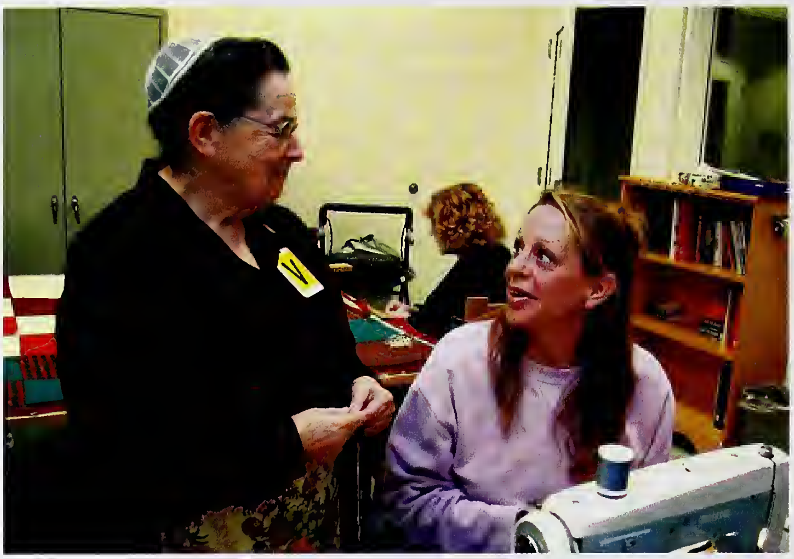
Blanket project brings healing, comfort

Mennonite Central Committee program lets prisoners 'give something back.'



Joanie Peters

Mennonite Central Committee Ontario volunteer Laura Nafziger (left) and Krista make blankets for MCC as part of the Grand Valley Institution for Women employment program.

Every Tuesday afternoon four women incarcerated at Grand Valley Institution for Women in Kitchener, Ont., make blankets for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) humanitarian aid shipments.

Krista, the mother of three children, ages 4 to 11, has been involved in the program since it started in March 2006.

"I'm here [in prison] because I took a life," says Krista. "I joined the program so that I can give something back to the world and be at peace with myself. It brings tears to my eyes and goose bumps to be able to give something back to the world."

Working with the women are 14 volunteers recruited and trained by MCC Ontario to develop trusting relationships with the women who are serving sentences of two years or more in this federal institution.

"This is very peaceful and healing," says Michelle, another woman involved in the program. "It is like you are part of a group. I have made bad choices, but there is more to me than my crime. I like to sew, I like to quilt and I like working with Mennonite women. They give of their time, not only to quilt but also to see us. We work together as if we have known each other forever. It's a nice feeling."

This nonjudgmental support, she says, is helping her and others start the process of reintegration into society.

"When we leave here, we have to see ourselves not only as ex-cons but as members of society," says Michelle. "These people [volunteers] don't treat us like ex-cons. We talk about our children, our life, what we do and what we can do. It's like being with my mother."

Getting to know women serving time in prison is also changing the lives of volunteers. Anna Mary Brubacher, a volunteer who has been involved with the program since it started, says at first she was apprehensive about going into a prison.

"But the first time you meet the women, you realize they are just like us—they are mothers, sisters and daughters," Brubacher says. "They care about their children. They are women who have made bad choices."

Cheryl Flamenco Steiner, a Grand Valley correctional program officer working with employment and employability programs, says volunteers provide hands-on supervision and a safe and nonjudgmental environment to assist women as they develop and strengthen employability skills.

Her mother, Irene Steiner, has been involved in promoting blanket-making for MCC for many years. In past years, Cheryl and her mother talked about the possibility of incorporating MCC blankets into an employment program.

The program, a partnership between the correctional facility and MCC Ontario's material resources and restorative justice departments, became a reality in March 2006.

The program also receives community support from individuals and businesses through donations of fabric and sewing machines.

Women can remain in the program indefinitely. In the first 10 months, about 10 women participated in the program and completed about 40 blankets.—*Gladys Terichow of Mennonite Central Committee*

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Vietnamese Mennonites share struggles

Don Sensenig visits leaders of minority group house churches in March.

Don Sensenig

Ten Mennonite house church leaders meet with Don Sensenig, a former Eastern Mennonite Missions worker in Vietnam, and a Vietnamese Mennonite pastor from Canada, to talk about their pressing spiritual and physical needs.

In a forested area two hours away from Ho Chi Minh City, life moves at a slower pace. This is the traditional homeland of a minority tribal people (places and names not given for security reasons) where a group of house churches have joined the Mennonite family of faith.

Not directly planted by Mennonite missionaries, several groups of house church leaders identified with the Mennonite church after receiving copies of the 1995 Mennonite Confession of Faith, which had been distributed widely in Vietnam.

As some Vietnamese Mennonite leaders applied for legal registration with the government, they also gave copies of the Confession to local authorities. They wanted to show that Mennonites were not some strange, indigenous sect but part of a worldwide body.

The Vietnamese Mennonite leaders also knew that the government had permitted Mennonite Central Committee to work in the country, and identification with Mennonite churches overseas could strengthen the argument that they were a legitimate religious body.

"It is mind-boggling to realize that during the decade that copies of the Mennonite Confession of Faith were circulating in Vietnam, an estimated 10,000-15,000 believers in unregistered house churches came to consider themselves part of the Mennonite family of faith," says Don Sensenig, a former Eastern Mennonite Missions worker.

Last month, Sensenig and a Vietnamese Mennonite pastor from Canada traveled to the region to meet with a delegation of 10 Vietnamese Mennonite house church leaders, where they talked about their faith and struggles.

As evangelical Christians and a minority people, they are suspected of being disloyal to the Vietnamese regime. They are constantly monitored and questioned but now rarely imprisoned.

Their way of life is changing. They can no longer practice traditional upland agriculture, and many of their lands have been confiscated. There are few sources of income and limited educational opportunities. "The long-term future of these and other minority peoples, who make up the majority of Mennonite and all other evangelical church members in Vietnam, is at risk," Sensenig says.

Sensenig notes that the Vietnamese government is also aware of these issues and wonders if there is a change coming that will replace antagonism with cooperation.—*Don Sensenig, former Eastern Mennonite Missions worker in Vietnam*

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"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

WORKERS

Allgyer, Michael D., was ordained as lead pastor at Shiloh Mennonite Church, Reading, Pa., effective Jan. 21.

Brunk, Truman H., was installed as interim pastor at Landisville Mennonite Church, Landisville, Pa., effective Feb. 1.

Burkhart, Larry E., was installed as lead pastor at Living Stones Fellowship, Quarryville, Pa., effective Jan. 1.

Byler, Jonathan J., transferred his credential to Lancaster Conference from Gulf States Mennonite Conference for service at Global Disciples, Lancaster, Pa., effective Feb. 23.

Hoover, Saralee "Sally" Thomas, who was licensed for specific ministry at South Seventh Street Mennonite Church, Reading, Pa., resigned effective Jan. 21.

Martin, Raymond, transferred his retired credential to Lancaster Conference from Virginia Mennonite Conference effective Feb. 23.

Wendland, Wolfgang, ordained lead pastor at Bethlehem Community Fellowship, Bethlehem, Pa., resigned effective Feb. 1.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bowers, Ryan Redfern, March 7, to Jeremy and Tara Turner Bowers, Hartville, Ohio.

Graber, Fiona Mirabel, Feb. 26, to Nathan and Amy Boller Graber, Iowa City, Iowa.

Miller, Tyler Paul, March 15, to Rick and Dawn Witmer Miller, Goshen, Ind.

Mitchell, Zuri, March 22, to Eric Mitchell and Niku Thomas, Philadelphia, Pa.

North, Lewis Gregory, March 11, to David North and Karyn Gregory, Denver, Colo.

Sobetsky, Savannah Lynee, March 4, to Donald and Lisa V. Sobetsky, Lansdale, Pa.

Spohn, Zachary Emmett, March 7, to Scott and Katie Kastanek Spohn, Lincoln, Neb.

Stamoulis, Anastasia Hermione, March 16, to Stam Stamoulis and Jennifer Brinkmeier, Philadelphia, Pa.

Zimmerman, Mara Beth and **Lisa Renae** (twins), March 21, to Delmar and Angela Zook Zimmerman, Leola, Pa.

MARRIAGES

Tuz/Yost: Jennifer Tuz, Milliken, Colo., and David Yost, Commerce City, Colo., March 17 at First Mennonite Church, Denver, Colo.

DEATHS

Brilhart, Don, 74, Scottdale, Pa., died March 16 of heart failure. Parents: Frank and Anna Harshbarger Brilhart. Funeral: March 21 at Ferguson Funeral Home, Scottdale.

Dare, Marguerite Hazel Roth, 86, Wayland, Iowa, died March 13 of a stroke. Spouse: John Dare (deceased). Parents: Chris and Emma Reschly Roth. Children: John Jacobsen, Kathy Anderson, Virginia Ross; 11 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 17 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Detweiler, Dorothy Hershey Stauffer, 83, Woodbury, Pa., died March 19. Spouse: Robert Detweiler. Spouse: Mark B. Stauffer (deceased). Parents: Willis and Ruth Hershey. Children: Heidi Lucius, Thomas; seven grandchildren. Funeral: March 22 at Martinsburg Mennonite Church, Martinsburg, Pa.

Friesen, David B., 95, Altona, Man., died March 11. Spouse: Susana Derksen Friesen (deceased). Parents: Bernhard B. and Aganetha Wiebe Friesen. Children: Gladys Hildebrand, Evelyn Isaac, Marge Schellenberg; eight grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 8 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Guengerich, Willard Eldon, 96, Parker, Colo., died Feb. 11. Spouse: Verna Linda Enns Guengerich (deceased). Parents: Joel and Magdalena Yoder Guengerich; Ella Fisher Guengerich. Children: Vernerd, Elaine Kauffman, Genelle, Joelene Johnson; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Memorial services: Feb. 16 at Glenwood Mennonite Church, Glenwood Springs, Colo., and Feb 17 at Peace Mennonite Community Church, Aurora, Colo.

Hildebrant, Menno John, 72, Altona, Man., died Jan. 7. Spouse: Nora Dueck Hildebrant. Spouse: Helen Heinrichs Hildebrant (deceased). Parents: Frank L. Hildebrant. Children: Wendy Desjarlais, Darlene Hildebrant, Sharon Gareau, Leonard, Lorna Clutterham, Sylvia Funk, Audrey Schmidt, Brad Dueck, Rod Dueck. Funeral: Jan. 12 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Kerr, Lois Zehr Smith, 85, West Liberty, Ohio, died March 22. Spouse: Ralph Kerr (deceased). Spouse: James Smith (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Mary Lehman Zehr. Child: Karl Smith; three grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 28 at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville, N.Y.

CMU CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) invites applications and nominations for the position of **Vice President Academic**, effective January 1, 2008. The VP Academic is responsible for providing overall leadership for academic projects and programs, academic policies, and academic personnel for all of CMU, and is a key member of the CMU leadership team.

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Processing of applications and nominations will begin immediately, and continue until the position is filled. Please reply via mail or e-mail to: **Canadian Mennonite University; Susan Warkentin, Director of Human Resources; 500 Shaftesbury Blvd.; Winnipeg, MB R3P 2N2**, or swarkentin@cmu.ca

Krueger, Mary Hamm, 93, Altona, Man., died Jan. 28. Spouse: Henry J. Krueger (deceased). Parents: Peter J. and Anna Klippenstein Hamm. Child: Edna Peters; one grandchild; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 8 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Loewen, Anne, 92, Eastview Place, Altona, Man., died Dec. 8, 2006. Spouse: Al Loewen. Parents: David E. and Sarah Klippenstein Friesen. Children: Gerald, Ken, Margaret Reimer, Karen Guenther; nine grandchildren, six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 12 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Martin, Melvin Myer, 74, Randallstown, Md., died March 13 of heart disease. Spouse: Arlene Saks Martin. Parents: Christian Zimmerman and Alva Myer Martin. Children: Jackie Hair, Wes; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: March 19 at Neffsville Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Musselman, Jeanine Groff, 43, Harleysville, Pa., died March 13 of a brain tumor. Spouse: Kendall D. Musselman. Parents: Larry and Kathleen G. Groff. Children: Miles, Forrest. Funeral: March 18 at Souderton Mennonite Church, Souderton, Pa.

Nussbaum, Frances "Fritzi" Mauger, 68, Akron, Pa., died March 21. Spouse: Donferd Nussbaum. Parents: Francis and Charlotte Edwards Mauger. Children: Eric, Kathy Eberly, Kristy Zehr; six grandchildren. Funeral: March 24 at Akron Mennonite Church.

Pauls, Justina Wiens, 97, Inman, Kan., died March 20. Spouse: Jake Pauls (deceased). Parents: Dr. Jacob H. and Katherine Doerksen Wiens. Children: Leo W., Janice D. Tolmachoff, Jeanette A. Heineken; 11 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 23 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Ray, Dorothea Bechtel, 58, Souderton, Pa., died Feb. 21. Spouse: Kenneth M. Ray, Jr. Parents: Norman H. and Irene Souder Bechtel. Children: Michael Eckman, Clinton Holmes, Elaine Holmes, Johanna Mearns, Jennifer Ray, Kathryn Ray, Eleanor Ray; six grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 26 at Vincent Mennonite Church, Spring City, Pa.

Rupp, Donald R., 84, Wauseon, Ohio, died Feb. 16 of an embolism. Spouse: Doris Wyse Rupp. Parents: Ira and Sarah Yoder Rupp. Children: Jerry, Peggy Wysong, Michael, Mary Nuberg, Susan Rupp, Cathy Rupp Huner; 13 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at Tedrow Mennonite Church, Wauseon.

Shope, Wilson Reynolds, 93, Scottdale, Pa., died Feb. 13 of scepsis. Spouse: Marjorie Miller Shope. Parents: William and Grace Shope. Children: Marjorie Stover, Wilma Ryan, Mary Allison, Alma Stoner; 14 grandchildren; 34 great-grandchildren; one great-great grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 17 at Ferguson Funeral Home, Scottdale.

Short, Ruth R. Grieser, 93, Archbold, Ohio, died March 21. Spouse: Harold Short (deceased). Parents: Ephriam and Jemima Baer Grieser. Children: Colenzo, Shirley Gerber Nofziger, Connie Short; seven grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 25 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Stewart, Kathy Rensberger Meck, 60, New Smyrna Beach, Fla., died March 4. Spouse: Bill Stewart. Spouse: Mervin Earl Meck (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Clara Roth Rensberger. Children: David Meck, Nancy Meck. Funeral: March 10 at St. Peter the Fisherman Episcopal Church, New Smyrna Beach.

Weaver, Verna Caroline Yoder, 91, Goshen, Ind., died March 18. Spouse: Joseph Allen Weaver (deceased). Parents: Olen and Barbara Mishler Yoder. Children: Jane Weaver; Carol Weaver; four grandchildren. Funeral: April 14 at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.

Central Christian School is seeking a ***full-time, upper-level high school English teacher*** to begin August 2007. Central Christian School, Kidron, Ohio, www.ccscomets.org. Contact Henry Beun at 330-857-7311 or hbeun@ccscomets.org.

Director of youth and young adult ministries, **Community Mennonite Fellowship**, Milton, Pa. He/she will serve with skilled and motivated volunteers to lead and oversee junior high, senior high and young adult ministries. This full-time position, serving 60+ youth and young adults, requires strong experience and demonstrated ministry success and a desire to make a difference for God. Responsibilities include: serving, discipling, leading, planning, motivating and networking with students, volunteers, parents and young adults. Send resumé to office@cmfmilton.org.

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Goshen College seeks a three-fourths-time ***assistant campus minister*** to begin in August 2007. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

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Portland Mennonite Church (www.portlandmennonite.org) is a growing, diverse congregation in an urban setting. We are seeking a ***full-time associate pastor*** to focus on strengthening the life and ministry of PMC by working in the areas of community life, outreach and adult Christian formation. Qualifications include a commitment to the theology of Mennonite Church USA, seminary training and demonstrated initiative, creativity and energy. Interested people should contact Marty Lowen, search committee chair at malowen@verizon.net or 971-219-2127. Applications accepted until April 27.

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Mennonite Education Agency seeks applicants for the position of ***associate director*** (focus on Hispanic pastoral and leadership education). This person will coordinate and promote Anabaptist education, especially theological education, for Hispanic members of Mennonite Church USA. This includes: (1) discovering and developing higher education opportunities (local and distance); (2) leading Instituto Biblico Anabautista; (3) promoting the culture of call among Hispanics; (4) promoting Mennonite educational institutions within Iglesia Menonita Hispana; (5) administering budget; (6) participating in fund-raising to meet program goals; and (7) working closely with IMH Departamento de Educación. Requirements: master's degree, excellent communications skills in English and Spanish, higher education teaching and administration experience. Knowledge of IMH is helpful. Position is based in Goshen, Ind. Additional information is available at www.MennoniteEducation.org or by email at info@MennoniteEducation.org.

Exciting opening for ***store manager*** (35-40 hours per week) of growing fair-trade retail store beginning June 1. **Ten Thousand Villages of Mishawaka** (Ind.) is a leading fair-trade retail store in the Michiana area. Must have commitment to faith-based mission of fair trade and have retail experience. Responsibilities include store operations, inventory control, supervision of paid and volunteer staff, and community educational outreach. Salary based on experience, and benefits are negotiable. Send resumé and cover letter to ardeanrf@verizon.net or 204 S. Sixth St., Goshen, IN 46528. Questions please call 574-537-0810. Applications will be reviewed starting April 20, 2007.

Central Christian School is seeking a ***high school math teacher*** and ***middle school math teacher*** to begin August 2007. Central Christian School, Kidron, Ohio, www.ccscomets.org. Contact Henry Beun at 330-857-7311 or hbeun@ccscomets.org.

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Hiding from Nature

Gordon Houser

Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, "Stay awhile."
The light flows from their branches.
And they call again, "It's simple," they say,
"and you too have come
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled
with light, and to shine."—Mary Oliver, "When I
Am Among the Trees"

Increasingly we spend most of our time indoors, away from the natural world. Yet few of us reflect on how this affects our faith, our understanding of God and the world around us.

One who has is Dale C. Allison Jr. in his essay "The World Around Us" in his book *The Luminous Dusk* (Eerdmans, 2006, $14). With technological progress comes an increasing isolation from Nature. For the most part, we welcome this; we dislike suffering and welcome comfort. But we don't think about the fact that "as we change our environment, our environment changes us."

Allison points out that religious belief has waned as we have moved indoors. Socrates, he writes, maintained that "philosophy has no foundation other than the feeling of wonder," and Aristotle pointed out the sun, moon and stars as "the chief objects of wonder."

Throughout history, religion and literature have reflected this wonder at the night sky. But today we rarely look at the stars. Most of us either are indoors or there are too many artificial lights to allow us to experience the wonder of the heavens that our forebears did.

When we read Psalm 136, which gives thanks to the Lord of lords, who "does great wonders, … made the heavens, … spread out the earth on the waters, … made the great lights, … the sun to rule over the day, … the moon and stars to rule over the night," we cannot identify well with the feeling of the Psalmist, who knew the stars.

When we read the teachings and stories of Jesus in the Gospels, we tend not to think about the fact that nearly all of these occurred outside.

Scripture is filled with references to Nature—"Go to the ant," "look at the birds of the air"—that may seem less familiar than quaint to us. How well can we understand Scripture when we live in such a different world (indoors) from its world.

As our closeness to Nature diminishes, so too does our experience of the wonder and mystery of God's creation.

We may have church retreats or view Nature with romantic notions, but few of us experience it intimately. The distance most of us live from where our food originates and our clothes are made, for example, leads us to treat much in our world as commodities to be consumed.

And while "Christianity has always posited that we cannot solve our own problems," our technological progress makes us feel more and more self-sufficient. In the face of droughts, floods and diseases, our forebears felt helpless and cried to God. Now we tend to look to meteorologists and doctors for help.

Allison writes: "The ongoing mastery of Nature, which is in effect removal from Nature, has reduced the habit of feeling helpless, a habit which was once, on a subconscious level, congruent with the Christian mission."

I work indoors most of the time, but I usually walk to and from work, which gives me at least some exposure to the whims of weather. One afternoon in late March, I walked home in a light rain. Five days later, I carried my jacket and sweated in the 80-degree heat. Today (April 5), I walked to work in a snowfall. Each day presented an instance of the bothersome beauty of our world and helped remind me that I'm not in control, that sometimes life is uncomfortable.

As I walk, I pray and try to listen, with the poet, to the trees say, "Stay awhile." TM

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

FILMS

The Lives of Others (R), which won this year's Academy Award for best foreign-language film, is a German film set in East Germany in the mid-1980s. It dissects the pervasiveness of fear in a totalitarian state and shows how it affects one's humanity. Yet it also depicts small but dangerous acts of courage and their long-range effects. It resonates with our own government's fear mongering, raising questions about how fear rules and affects our own humanity.

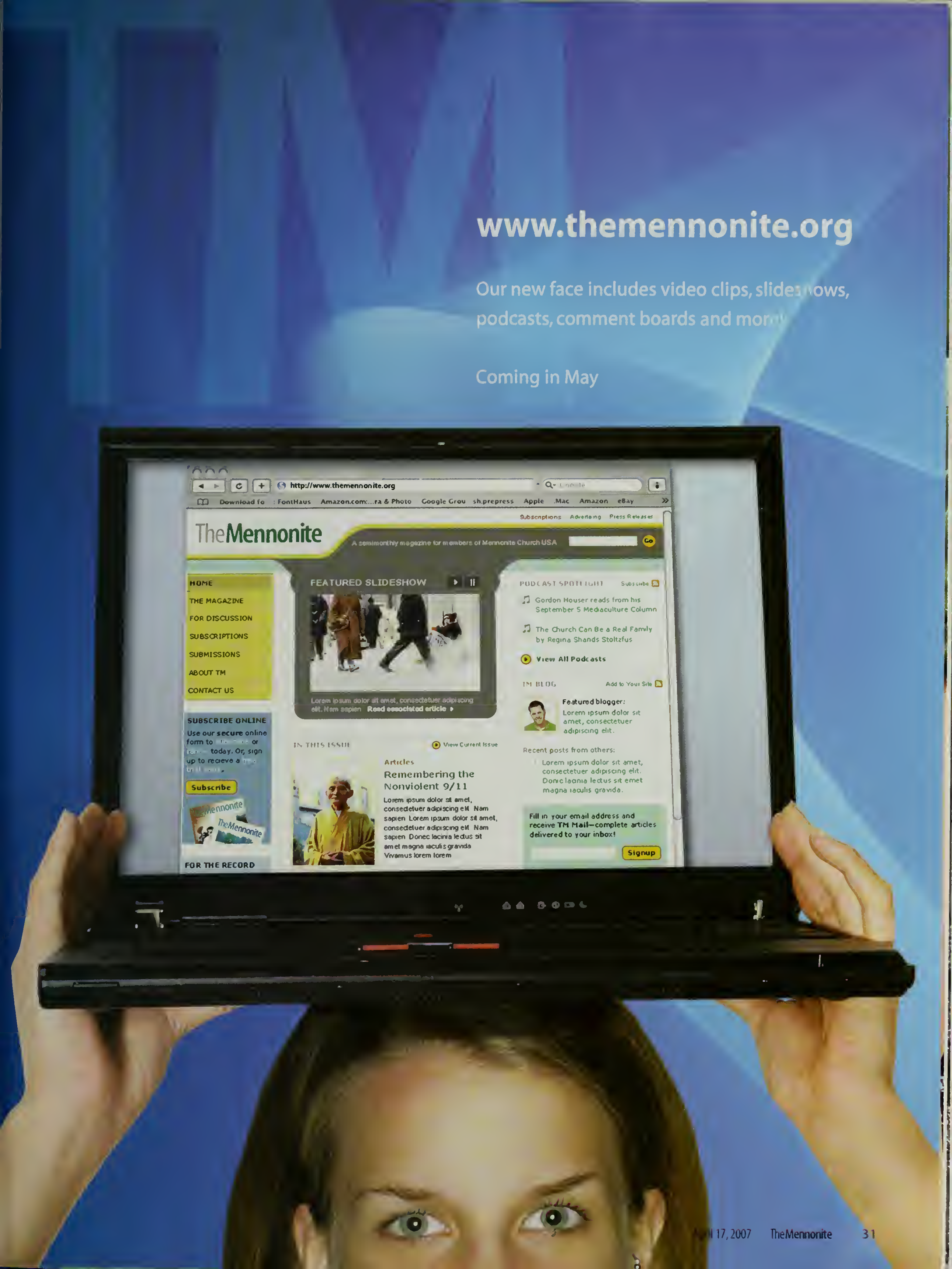
DVDS

Stranger Than Fiction (PG-13), while not a great film, is enjoyable both intellectually and emotionally. It tells a delightful fable about Harold Crick, an IRS auditor who finds himself the subject of narration only he can hear. This narration affects his work, his love interest and possibly his death. It points toward a lesson about the relative importance of a great work of art to a good life.

BOOKS

The Divine Embrace: Recovering the Passionate Spiritual Life by Robert E. Webber (BakerBooks, 2006, $16.99) is part of Webber's Ancient-Future series, in which he seeks to combine the truth and passion of early Christian spirituality. He argues for a spirituality that is situated not in modern rationalism or postmodern narcissism but in God's story. While it's a bit too tidy, the book nevertheless points to an important way forward in living a spiritual life based on God's grace.

Ecstasy and Intimacy: When the Holy Spirit Meets the Human Spirit by Edith M. Humphrey (Eerdmans, 2006, $21) argues that "our spirituality, if it is truly Christian, must be focused on the incarnate God who has revealed to us the mystery of the Trinity." The relations between Father, Son and Holy Spirit are marked by "ecstasy" ("going out" of oneself) and "intimacy" (closeness with another). She helps us discern the difference between the Holy Spirit and the spirit of the age.



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Gordon Houser reads from his September 5 Mediaculture Column

The Church Can Be a Real Family by Regina Shands Stoltzfus

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Articles

Remembering the Nonviolent 9/11

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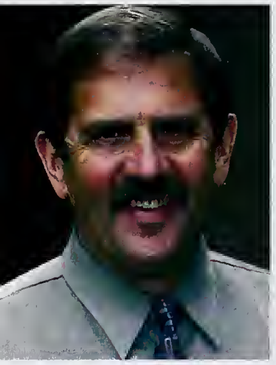

Everett J. Thomas

To Web 2.0

I did not know you could send a Hallmark card designed specifically for a pedestrian you hit while you were driving your car. I found out the hard way. Last November while in a crosswalk, a friend of mine was blinded by the sun as she turned the corner and struck me. After a few hours in the emergency room, I was released with nothing more serious than bumps and bruises.

But I was astonished several days later to receive a beautiful card from the friend driving the van that knocked me down. On the front of her card were the words, "You probably knew this, but I've been praying for you ever since I accidently hit you." On the back was the Hallmark logo. I asked her where she found such a card. She explained that she made it on her personal computer with a Hallmark program. She just picked out a template and typed in her own words.

We live in a digital world, and this incident demonstrates why *The Mennonite* is investing heavily in a new Web site to be launched in May. This kind of personalization has spread to the Internet and is becoming so pervasive that a new phrase has been coined for it: Web 2.0.

The first generation of Web sites were designed to provide information and a link to the people who owned the site. This use of the Web has been dubbed Web 1.0. But now, a new generation of users expects all kinds of ways to interact with Web sites. Such interaction can be spontaneous, or it can be programmed to happen regularly at intervals established by the user.

A new generation of Internet users expects all kinds of ways to interact with Web sites.

We will venture into a Web 2.0 world when we launch our new Web site in several week. The purpose is to draw users toward the paper magazine and, ultimately, become subscribers if they do not already receive the magazine.

Here is what will be available.

Those who like to listen to articles on their iPods will be able to download many of the editorials, columns and news stories from *The Mennonite* and then play them at their leisure.

Those who want news stories and articles just as soon as they are available can receive them through RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds. Those who want a weekly (electronic) newsletter, called "TMail," with some content from *The Mennonite*, will be able to sign up for it to arrive by email. This newsletter will also include a summary of the Young Anabaptist Radicals blog.

The new site will also allow us to show video clips and slide shows. Indeed, we plan to inaugurate the new video capability by showing a clip of two Mennonite Church USA leaders dancing with Congolese Mennonites during a February worship service. But the site will also allow us to make much more news available than is possible within the 32 pages of this magazine.

We plan to post most of the news releases we receive from all Mennonite Church USA agencies and schools, Mennonite World Conference and Mennonite Central Committee. We will also include a selection of the photos that come with those releases for users to see as a slide show.

But there is more interactivity. We will begin a new "personals" ad section. This will allow users to buy a classified ad that remains on the site for one month. We envision this being particularly helpful to people doing research and those wanting to announce upcoming events. Those looking for companionship will be able to use this new section as well.

The most interactive capability of the new site will allow users to post responses to the authors of articles we publish. Then others can post responses to those responses.

Based on the experience of other magazines—especially *Christianity Today,* which is the leader among Christian periodicals that utilize this kind of synergy with their print magazine—we are convinced that such interactivity will draw "digital" Mennonites toward the issues and news we publish from Mennonite Church USA. Joining the Web 2.0 phenomenon, we hope, will build interest among the next generation and develop even more loyalty to our church—*ejt*

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

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Words of blessing

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

I have a friend who, for the purposes of this column I'll call Mike. Mike regularly attends our Monday evening community meal.

Some years ago, Mike approached me with a request. Pulling a rosary from his pocket, Mike asked if I'd say a blessing over it. I explained that I am not a priest, and that Mennonite pastors don't typically offer such blessings. But Mike did not care about such refinements. He insisted that I bless his rosary.

What could I do? I sheepishly made the sign of the cross over his rosary with my right hand. I then asked that God bless it to Mike's good use and benefit.

Mike expressed gratitude and offered to bring a small gift for the church the following Monday. I told him he need not bother. Mike did not listen to me. The next week he brought a $10 bill in an envelope and asked me to put it in the offering plate. He said he wanted to show his gratitude for all the meals he's eaten with us.

Each time Mike buys a new rosary, he brings it to me for my blessing. I'm becoming an old hand at it. He does not always offer something for the offering plate, for which I'm grateful. He needs the money more than we do. And I don't want him to feel obligated. Whatever blessing a Mennonite pastor can offer over a rosary ought to be free.

I know I am not a priest. I retain my theological and ecclesial commitments. But I have, with Mike's help, learned to hold them a bit more lightly. I have learned some other things, too.

Mike has taught me the value of **words of blessing**. They have value in part because they seem increasingly rare. Public discourse seems bereft of anything but sarcasm, profanity and slander. Private discourse, even my own, seems entirely taken up with practicalities and cost-benefit analyses. Rarely do we offer simple words of blessing. Even more rarely do we ask for them.

Mike has set me an example. By making his need known, he challenges me to speak words of blessing more freely. And he invites me to make my own need for blessing known.

Mike has also taught me something about **street-level ecumenical relations**. Church leaders and scholars are doing their part in engaging one another across denominational and other lines. Mennonite leaders play a role in these discussions. Their efforts are necessary in creating, Lord willing, a more peaceful world and united church.

But Mike's contribution is equally necessary. His call to lay down my Mennonite scruples and make the sign of the cross over his rosary reminds me that we are one in Christ Jesus. Whatever separates us is only temporary. Our common faith in Christ will last forever.

Finally, Mike has taught me something about **community**. It's so easy for us generous, progressive Mennonites to think we have something of great value to offer the world. It's easy because it is true. But our generosity can be divisive. It can drive a wedge between us and the people we hope to serve. My own language reveals our tendency to think in terms of "us" and "them."

But Mike pushes against that tendency by insisting that I listen to him clearly. He acts against my good intentions. He teaches me so much I ought to have known but did not.

True community must include such mutual benefit. Words of blessing, good food, prayers and learning must all be shared and acknowledged. If these gifts flow only in one direction, one might call the result a mission project. And mission projects have their place. But Mike has taught me to prefer community to mission projects.

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Argument about resurrection unnecessary

In "The Resurrection: Miracle or Myth?" (April 3), Clair Hochstetler seemed to be a bit simplistic. Perhaps due to space constraints or lack of desire to dig deeper, the article looked at only two possibilities when it comes to the issue of Jesus' resurrection.

In the paragraph about the swoon theory , I was lost at what Hochstetler was trying to say with, "The swoon theory is, merely from a medical point of view, ridiculous in the extreme." I hope Hochstetler can explain how death and a third-day resurrection makes more "medical" sense than a swoon theory. Then Hochstetler steps out in space with the following: "Belief in the Resurrection, therefore, does not constitute a blind leap into a dark chasm but a step into the light. Indeed, the evidence for Christ's resurrection, based on these modern medical and psychological principles, is overwhelming—if one is willing to examine it with an open mind, desiring to know the truth." What "medical and psychological principles" are overwhelming when looking at resurrection three days after death?

I find this circular approach to such a question childish and not necessary in the time in which we live.—*Jim Compton-Schmidt, Fresno, Calif.*

Church misrepresented

Re the article about me ("Young, Female and a Pastor," April 3), Sarah Roth did an excellent job writing about me. Unfortunately, when I was being interviewed by Sarah, I must have led her to believe that Forest Hills Mennonite Church does not support women pastors. It is true that the Lancaster, Pa., area did not have many women pastors when I was growing up, but Forest Hills never taught me that women in leadership was unbiblical. Many women were encouraged to use their gifts and serve in my church. But I believed that women should not hold the place of lead pastor in a congregation because all my pastors had been male. This is not something that the leaders of my church taught but rather something that I came to believe on my own. Forest Hills always encouraged me to grow in my faith and use my gifts as a young woman, and they continue to do so today. Since I left for college, Forest Hills has hired three additional staff members, and now three of the five staff members are women.

I apologize for this mix-up and am sorry for misrepresenting the people who attend my "home church."—*Sarah Rohrer, Greentown, Ind.*

Not proud to be an American

Re June Thomsen's letter in April 3 Readers Say ("Christian Peace Witness Sobering, Inspiring"): How can one who is a follower of The Way, be proud to be an American? We took our land from the Natives, stole our laborers from Africa and made them slaves, and use military strength on whomever we think needs it. I'm happy to be an American, but our history is nothing to be proud of.

Jesus did not use civil disobedience to accomplish his mission. He accomplished his mission in a country under foreign occupation. Our mission is not to save America but to lead people to Jesus. Prayer is our weapon to change America.—*Doris Martin, Gettysburg, Pa.*

Church must acknowledge neglect

Everett Thomas' editorial about the Mennonite church's need for deacons is most appropriate ("Mutual Aid Needs Deacons," March 20). In my youth (the 1920s and 1930s) we had such deacons. When MMA [Mennonite Mutual Aid] was formed, it was to take over this function, and it proceeded to insure members of the Mennonite church with not much regard for their credit standing or for unusual poor-health conditions. In accordance with New Testament principles and practices, that agency insured "poor risks" as well as good risks. However, in order to cover such risks, MMA had to raise its rates above those of secular insurance companies—who of course could keep their rates down by not insuring poor risks.

But then, as frugal Mennonites began to compare rates, they came to realize that the rates of commercial companies were lower. So MMA survived by doing what it thought it had to do:

IN THIS ISSUE

We did not set out to do a Mother's Day issue, but as so often happens in this work, enough articles related to women and mothers arrived on our desk to develop a general theme. Carmen Schrock-Hurst expands on Jesus' reference to himself as a mother hen (page 8). Nancy V. Lee takes a fresh look at the Samaritan woman in John 4 (page 14). We also asked for permission to reprint Marathana Prothro's article (page 16) about her relationship with her mother; this article first appeared in a recent issue of *Timbrel*. Then there is the provocative poem by Barbara Esch Shisler in which a young mother is asked whether she would keep a child with Down syndrome. To this mix we added the Weight Watchers article (page 12) by Margalea Warner, who says, "I long to look at my shadow self—that fat lady in my head with her committee of negative voices—and say, 'Let's do lunch.' " Finally, Anna Groff reflects on Isaiah's description of a mother's comfort and the time her baby bunnies died.—*Editor* stopped taking poor risks. It had no choice at the moment.

I sense that MMA is conscious of this problem and is trying to solve it, but its solution will require a bold face-off by the entire denomination. May the Mennonite church please acknowledge its neglect of its not-so-healthy members. Does it really have a choice in the matter?—*Paton Yoder, Goshen, Ind.*

Mennonites who support Iraq war

I imagine that Jim Neff's anxieties on behalf of Mennonite church attendees who have children or family members serving in Iraq are greatly exaggerated (Readers Say, March 20). If I understand the Church Member 2006 demographics and statistics reported in the Feb. 6 issue, there is broad support among Mennonites for President Bush and his policies in Iraq. My experience has been that one can get through most U.S. Mennonite services and publications in the last five years without even realizing there is a war going on. However, my neighbor, a Lutheran pastor, never fails in any of his sermons to address the infamy of the Iraq War. This is the case even though he has a number of people in his congregation who have children and family members serving in Iraq. Not only has no one become offended, but I gather the feeling in his particular congregation is that it is the duty of Christians to speak up against the cruelty inflicted upon the unfortunate people of Iraq.

If I had a relative or child in harm's way, I know what would be most offensive: Mennonites who have no intention of themselves or their children serving in Iraq waxing confident in their C.O. status while—through a theological sleight of hand—continuing to support Bush's disastrous and cruel war in Iraq.—*Paul R. Schlitz Jr., Baltimore*

Need bridges, not walls

Good Friday became darker as I read the April 3 issue. That's because I felt more dividing walls instead of clear definitive bridge-building with the women-and-church-leadership issues in Readers Say and the articles "Young, Female and a Pastor" and "Women Pastors Report Job Satisfaction."

My counsel: Women will always contribute within our churches, whether or not they are ordained. Thus my number one prayer is that the best minds, hearts and souls of Camp 1 and Camp 2 will truly start to connect for the first time in years. Some of our best current women's stories have not been heard. As a published author who continually gathers women's stories, I find those resources to be extremely helpful as stories of the past help soften the rough edges of today's hot issues. May we grant justice, mercy and peace—as we are forgiven when we know not what we do. Thanks to Anne Stuckey ("We Assume Too Much"); her closing words can surely lift stones for our next bridges.—*Joanne Hess Siegrist, Bird In Hand, Pa.*

Jantzens' work continues in India

Thank you for sending *The Mennonite*. I just now received the March 20 issue. I am really sad to note the death of Lubin Jantzen, our fatherly missionary (page 6).

I am a member of Bhartiya General Conference Mennonite Church (BGCMC) in Jagdeeshpur, where we lived and grew spiritually under Lubin Jantzen and his family. They established us for the Lord's work. Hundreds of the people of Jagdeeshpur are the fruit of his ministry. I am one of them. What the missionaries have done for us has prospered.

Now I am in the process of collecting the history of BGCMC and the other 30 churches. I would like to make a Web site of the Mennonite churches in India. I am also working on a prayer and support ministry for all 30 BGCMC pastors.

Please extend my sympathy and prayers to Tillie, Esther, Daniel, Jim, Jonathan and their families.—*Udit Sona, Allahabad, India*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

My congregation focuses on Mother's Day in our Sunday worship: (37 votes)

○ Every year (46%)

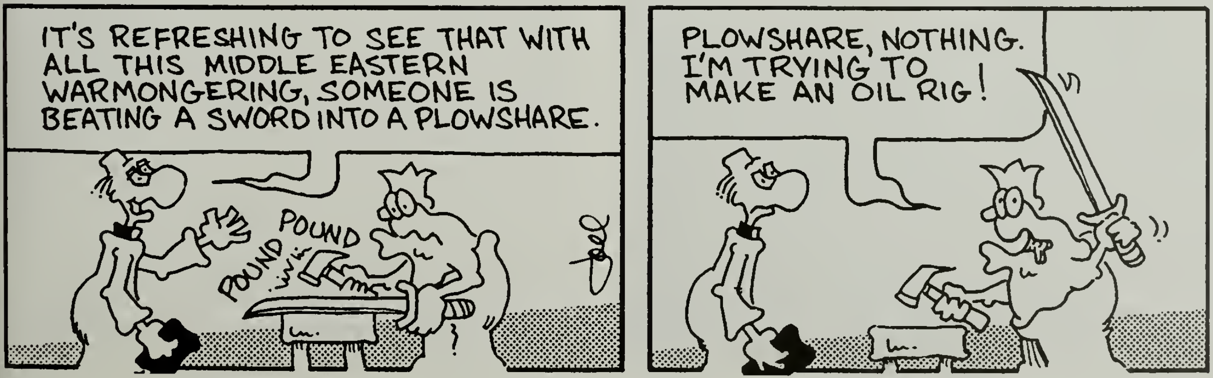
○ Sometimes (32%)

○ Rarely (16%)

○ Never (5%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


IT'S REFRESHING TO SEE THAT WITH ALL THIS MIDDLE EASTERN WARMONGERING, SOMEONE IS BEATING A SWORD INTO A PLOWSHARE.
POUND
POUND
Joel
PLOWSHARE, NOTHING. I'M TRYING TO MAKE AN OIL RIG!

IN BRIEF

Nisly gives Smith lecture on Catholic literature

Bluffton (Ohio) University professor of English Lamar Nisly presented the annual C. Henry Smith Peace Lecture at Goshen (Ind.) College April 16 on "'Good for the Soul,' Or Why Mennonites Should Read Catholic Literature." Nisly examined connections Mennonites can find when they read contemporary Catholic literature. Nisly argued that Mennonites should read Catholic literature because the fiction shows an engagement with themes of peace and justice, the all-consuming nature of following Christ, the sacredness of each individual and the possibility of grace. These lectures primarily focused on fiction writing by authors Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy and Tim Gautreaux. *—Goshen College*

EMU student falls from roof during prank

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Early Friday morning, April 13, a prank orchestrated by a group of Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) students turned tragic when a student fell off the roof of the three-story Oakwood residence hall.

Michael Wiebe-Johnson, 19, a first-year pre-engineering student from Elkhart, Ind., was injured while the group was trying to place a stuffed buffalo from the university's Suter Science Center lobby on the dorm roof. He was transported by helicopter to the University of Virginia medical center around 6:25 a.m.

Wiebe-Johnson was moved April 14 from the trauma center onto the critical care unit. He suffered a fractured hip, several cracked vertebrae and a concussion, but doctors did not detect any paralysis. By the next day his condition was upgraded to "stable."

The buffalo was a gift to the D. Ralph Hostetter Museum of Natural History from Ervin and Pat Yoder of Berlin, Ohio. It weighs between 250 and 300 pounds.

"Michael is slowly regaining his memory of the events leading up to the fall," Ken L. Nafziger, vice president for student life, said April 15. "He's been able to talk with his parents and friends from EMU, and his situation seems to be progressing nicely. A lot of prayers have been answered." *—Eastern Mennonite University*

MCC photo

Virginia Mennonites help build sand dams

Six people from Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va., who traveled to Kenya in mid-March lend their hands to a project that provides water in drought-prone farm communities. The group spent a week and a half working with rural Kenyans to construct two concrete dams, called sand dams, that store water under a deep layer of sand. The construction project is part of a larger effort by two Kenyan organizations to build 80 sand dams in Kenya this year, with funding from Mennonite Central Committee.*—MCC*

Bethel, Bartel lauded for science education

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—For the third time, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) has recognized Bethel College for the high number of its science majors who go on to earn M.D. degrees and/or Ph.D. degrees in the sciences. Bethel also was recognized in 1996 and 2003.

HHMI, a major supporter of biomedical science teaching and research worldwide, has been recognizing U.S. colleges and universities in this way through its program Initiatives for Colleges every four years, beginning in 1996. No other four-year college or master's degree-granting university in Kansas has received the honor.

To identify institutions for recognition, HHMI assesses the most recent 10-year period for which data are available on both the percentage and the absolute number of graduates from U.S. institutions who have entered medical school or have earned doctorates in biology, chemistry, physics or mathematics.

In another HHMI program recognizing biological and biomedical scientists for their creativity and productivity, Bonnie Bartel, a 1983 Bethel graduate, was selected an "HHMI professor." The goal of this program is to "recognize and support innovative approaches to teaching, infusing undergraduate science with the excitement and rigor of scientific research as a model for fundamental reform of the way undergraduate science is taught at research universities."*—Bethel College*

Goshen commits to 'climate neutral' campus

GOSHEN, Ind.—Goshen College plans to sharply reduce and eventually eliminate all the college's global warming emissions and is supporting more research and educational efforts to help stabilize the earth's climate.

President James E. Brenneman made that pledge last month on behalf of Goshen College by becoming a charter signatory to the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment. In doing so, Brenneman joined leaders of 175 other higher education institutions that also have agreed to neutralize greenhouse gas emissions—the point at which carbon-dioxide emissions are offset by the use of renewable sources of energy and the oxygen released from trees and other plants on campus.

"We are very concerned about life on this planet," Brenneman said. "This is one more way we can heal and care for the world."

Goshen becomes the second higher education institution in Indiana (after Ball State University) and the first Mennonite college or university to sign the landmark climate commitment, which is

Larry Bartel

At work for play

Marsha Kanagy, Timberville, Va., and Ivan White, who directs the construction, install a piece of siding. Disaster Management students at Hesston (Kan.) College are putting the finishing touches on a playhouse that was sold during the Kansas Mennonite Central Committee relief sale April 14 in Hutchinson, Kan. Aside from raising money for MCC, the primary purpose of building the playhouse is to provide hands-on experience for the students.—*Hesston College*

aimed at reducing emissions that scientists say are changing climates, threatening the planet's ecosystems and its economy and threatening many lives.—*Goshen College*

Aberdeen church celebrates 100 years

ABERDEEN, Idaho—First Mennonite Church of Aberdeen will celebrate its 100th anniversary June 23-24. Founded July 4, 1907, it was the first church organized in Aberdeen. The theme will be "Faith and Community—Through the Years."

The centennial celebration will be held during Aberdeen Days, along with other community events. A highlight will be a short concert sung by a community choir and directed by Daniel Hege, conductor and music director of the Syracuse (N.Y.) Symphony Orchestra, who is an Aberdeen High School graduate and a member of First Mennonite Church.

Aberdeen is a diverse, cooperative community. Though Mennonites are relatively few in number, they have always been a part of local agriculture, business and professional life.—*Carl Hege*

Mennonite students, church help in Mexico

SALEM, Ore.—Aubree Davis and Kala Talbott, seniors at Western Mennonite School in Salem, traveled to Mexico in February and for two weeks worked with volunteers from Warden (Wash.) Mennonite Church to build the foundations and walls for a new parsonage.

The parsonage will house pastor Juan Ruiz, his wife and two children. Ruiz is pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church at Campo 77, located south of Cuidad Obregon, Sonora, Mexico. According to Manual Ruiz, pastor of Cuidad Obregon Mennonite Church, the current parsonage is too small and has flooring challenges that make it unsuitable for living quarters.

Warden Mennonite has a sister-church relationship with a Mennonite congregation at Las Lajitas, Sinaloa, Mexico, that is part of the same conference as Bethel Mennonite. Curt Dorsing of Warden Mennonite has led volunteer groups from his congregation on more than eight work trips to Mennonite churches in Sinaloa and Sonora, Mexico.

Upon returning, Davis and Talbott described the trip as a unique experience that stretched them out of their comfort zones. In the past three years more than 11 percent of Western's graduating seniors have gone on to serve in Africa, South and Central America, China and various states in the United States before attending college.
—*Western Mennonite School*

Light a lamp for peace between U.S. and Iran

AKRON, Pa.—As tensions remain high between the United States and Iran, participants in a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)-led delegation to Iran in February (see March 20, page 24) are urging congregations to light oil lamps as a reminder to pray for peace and for the people of Iran.

The delegation met with the Iranian president, a former president and other political and religious leaders in Iran. At the end of each meeting, the U.S. group presented Iranian leaders with ceramic oil lamps made by Indiana potter Dick Lehman, as well as quilted wall hangings.

"[Each lamp] was a concrete symbol of our commitment to remain in prayer for them," says Ron Flaming, MCC's director of international programs. Delegation members told leaders the Bible calls on Christians to remember the leaders of the world with prayer and that the lamps signified a promise to remember Iran and its leaders.

Congregations can order ceramic oil lamps from Dick Lehman pottery by calling 574-534-1162, or other lamps or candles can be used.—*MCC*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

IN BRIEF

U.S. students at CMU may receive U.S. student aid

On March 28, Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg learned that Americans who study there are eligible to receive student aid from the U.S. Department of Education. A year of studies at CMU costs about $13,000, including tuition, room, board, books and fees, compared with paying $20,000 to $30,000 to study at a comparable U.S. private college. (All figures in U.S. dollars.)
—*CMU*

Prayer and action May 20-21 for Colombia

Three partners of Christian Peacemaker Teams Colombia Team—Jenny Neme of Justapaz, Ricardo Esquivia of CEDECOL and Peter Stucky of the Colombian Mennonite Church—write, "Sisters and brothers, please join us in fervent prayer and faithful witness for a sustainable peace in Colombia." More than 3.5 million people are displaced, the second largest internally displaced population in the world, yet thousands risk their lives to heed God's call for peace. CPT invites all its members and supporters in Colombia, the United States and Canada to remember our brothers and sisters in Colombia May 20-21 in prayer and worship, then ask your government to take action on Colombia's humanitarian crisis. To get involved, go to www.peaceincolombia.org.—*CPT*

A mother's hands, a mother's heart

Mother's Day personifies Jesus' command to love friend and enemy alike.

by Carmen Schrock-Hurst

Mother's Day reminds me of the time Jesus referred to himself as a mother hen, when he wept over the city of Jerusalem and said that he had often longed to gather the people under his wings "as a hen gathers her chicks" (Luke 13:34b NIV). Under his wings we find refuge, shelter, comfort, hope and unconditional love.

In 1 Samuel 1 and 2, we read a story about a mother, Hannah, who was unable to have children. She lived in a culture and a time when this was a particularly painful reality for a woman to face. Her husband took a second wife, Peninnah, who bore several children and was disrespectful to Hannah. One year, on the family's annual trek to the temple to offer sacrifices, Hannah prays passionately.

I have no doubt that Hannah prayed faithfully for a child for many years. And I have no doubt that God heard her all those years. Yet for some reason God's hand was still, and her prayer seemed unanswered. On this day she prays fervently and finds inner peace to come to terms with living with God's answer, whatever the answer. She has made a promise that if God gives her a child she will bring the child to the temple to be reared, and in making that promise she has found peace.

When the child is weaned, Hannah does what to my mother's heart seems unthinkable, she gives him away.

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Later she bears Samuel, whose name sounds like the Hebrew word for "heard by God" or "asked of God." Hannah nurses Samuel until he is weaned, which scholars think was in that culture around the age of 3. And when the child is weaned, Hannah does what to my mother's heart seems unthinkable, she gives him away.

If any of you have a 3-year-old in your house, you know how full of life 3-year-olds are—constant movement and chatter, endless questions and a true delight as they discover the world. How empty Hannah's house and arms must have seemed when Samuel was no longer there.

My mother's heart cries out to Eli the priest, and I want to rewrite history. I want to say, "Eli, now that Hannah has shown she is serious about her vow to God, why don't you let her take Samuel home and finish raising him. She can bring him back to the temple when he is 12 or 16, but 3 is too young to be away from his mother." But Eli doesn't do that. And though Hannah must have experienced periods of grief, we don't read about them. Instead, when she honors God by taking Samuel to the temple, she breaks forth into a beautiful hymn of praise. Some call this the Magnificat of the Old Testament, and indeed it is similar to the song Mary sang when she was told she would bear the Christ child.

Hannah, a simple, no doubt illiterate peasant woman, is so pleased to be able to honor God with her obedience that she sings God praises. She is so sure that God is holy that she focuses on God and not on her own action. Then we read that each year she and her husband came to the temple she brought her son a little coat (verse 19).

Eli prayed for them, and eventually Hannah bore more children. Indeed her cup of joy was running over. But my mother's heart knows that a piece of her heart stayed with Samuel in the temple each year when she left him there to do God's work. And we read that Samuel answered God's call to him with, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." Samuel was made available to do God's work by his mother, Hannah.

In the beginning, Hannah's hands were clasped in prayer, begging for a child. Then Hannah's hands held that child, bathed him, wiped his fevered brow, caressed him and fed him for three years. Then Hannah's hands led that child to the temple, where she honored her promise to God.

Later, Hannah's hands made a coat for Samuel, year after year, with each stitch a prayer that he would come to know and honor God, each stitch a prayer that God would make her son an instrument of justice and holiness. Indeed Hannah's hands and her prayers shaped Samuel to be used by God. And God used Samuel and Samuel's hands to anoint kings for the kingdom of Israel.

I am reminded of my grandmother Sarah, who only had the use of one hand and one arm due to an illness when she was 19. Grandma Sarah almost singlehandedly raised seven children; her husband was often gone all week long for work. She learned to sew and make beautiful quilts using her left arm, even though she was born right-handed. Her ability to make beauty in spite of personal loss and suffering was a lesson to me.

Perhaps the story of Hannah reminds all of us that our children do not belong to us but to God, and God has a greater purpose for their lives than we can even imagine.

God has given us hands. In honor of Hannah, this matriarch of the Old Testament, and in honor of our own mothers and grandmothers, let us all commit to use our hands for God's work. Perhaps the story of Hannah will call us to honor God with our lives and our children's lives, to dedicate ourselves to God's work and to building God's future for the world. Perhaps the story of Hannah reminds all of us that our children do not belong to us but to God, and God has a greater purpose for their lives than we can even imagine. We are called to give our children back to God to do God's work.

One of the women credited with beginning what we now celebrate as Mother's Day is Anna Jarvis. She was a Methodist born in 1850 in West Virginia. Her mother, Anna Reeves Jarvis, organized Mother's Work Day Clubs in the 1850s that

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provided health care for the poor, inspected milk and established shelters for children with tuberculosis. When the Civil War broke out, Jarvis called together her clubs from both sides of the fighting, begging the women to pledge that friendship and goodwill would not be a casualty of the war. Her women from both sides of the war worked together to nurse soldiers and save many lives.

Following the war, Jarvis organized Mothers' Friendship Days to bring families that had been torn apart by the war together. Jarvis herself knew great sorrow and hardship, losing eight of her 12 children to death before they reached adulthood. Her life revolved around the church and church work, as she was married to a pastor and taught Sunday school for 25 years.

The primary concerns of the original Mother's Day were international peace, overcoming poverty and ministering to the poor and sick.

In 1907, two years after her mother's death, the younger Anna organized the first Mother's Day to honor her mother. She went on to work tirelessly to establish a nationally recognized day to honor mothers, and in 1915 President Wilson signed a congressional resolution officially proclaiming the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day, which is now observed in many countries around the world.

Another woman credited with helping found Mother's Day was Julia Ward Howe, who worked against slavery and wrote the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Following the Civil War, Howe focused on two other causes: voting rights for women and world peace.

Howe began organizing what she called Mothers' Peace Day festivals, celebrated on June 2. She was convinced that, though the world may be divided by war and conflict, the experience of raising children could bind the mothers of the world together into one family, a family that could make a difference. So the primary concerns of the original Mother's Day were international peace, overcoming poverty and ministering to the poor and sick. From the beginning this was a day not simply to remember our own mothers but to extend love outward to family, friend, stranger, foreigner and even enemy. In the truest sense, Mother's Day personifies Jesus' command to love friend and enemy alike.

Today we live in a world that has faced many changes since the lives of Anna Jarvis and Julia Ward Howe, who worked to found Mother's Day 200 years ago. And we certainly live in a world that has faced vast changes since the biblical Hannah lived some 3,000 years ago. Yet some things remain the same. Mothers still love their children with all their hearts. Mothers still use their hands to show that love.

And mothers still pray. It is no doubt the fervent prayer of many mothers around the world—Christian mothers, Jewish mothers, Muslim mothers, all kinds of mothers—that their children grow up in peace, have enough to eat, lie down to sleep at night without fear of bombs or terrorists and have a better life than they had. I believe God hears those prayers. I also believe God often answers prayers through the hands of his children, through the hands of the church. It is up to us to be the answers to some mother's prayer, to share what we've been given, feed the hungry, visit prisoners, bind up the wounds of war, shelter the homeless, do God's work and be the hands and heart of God for those around us.

Carmen Schrock-Hurst is on the leadership team at The Table, which meets on the campus of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Her article is adapted from a Mother's Day sermon she gave May 9, 2004, at Union Church of Manila.

Why

by Barbara Esch Shisler

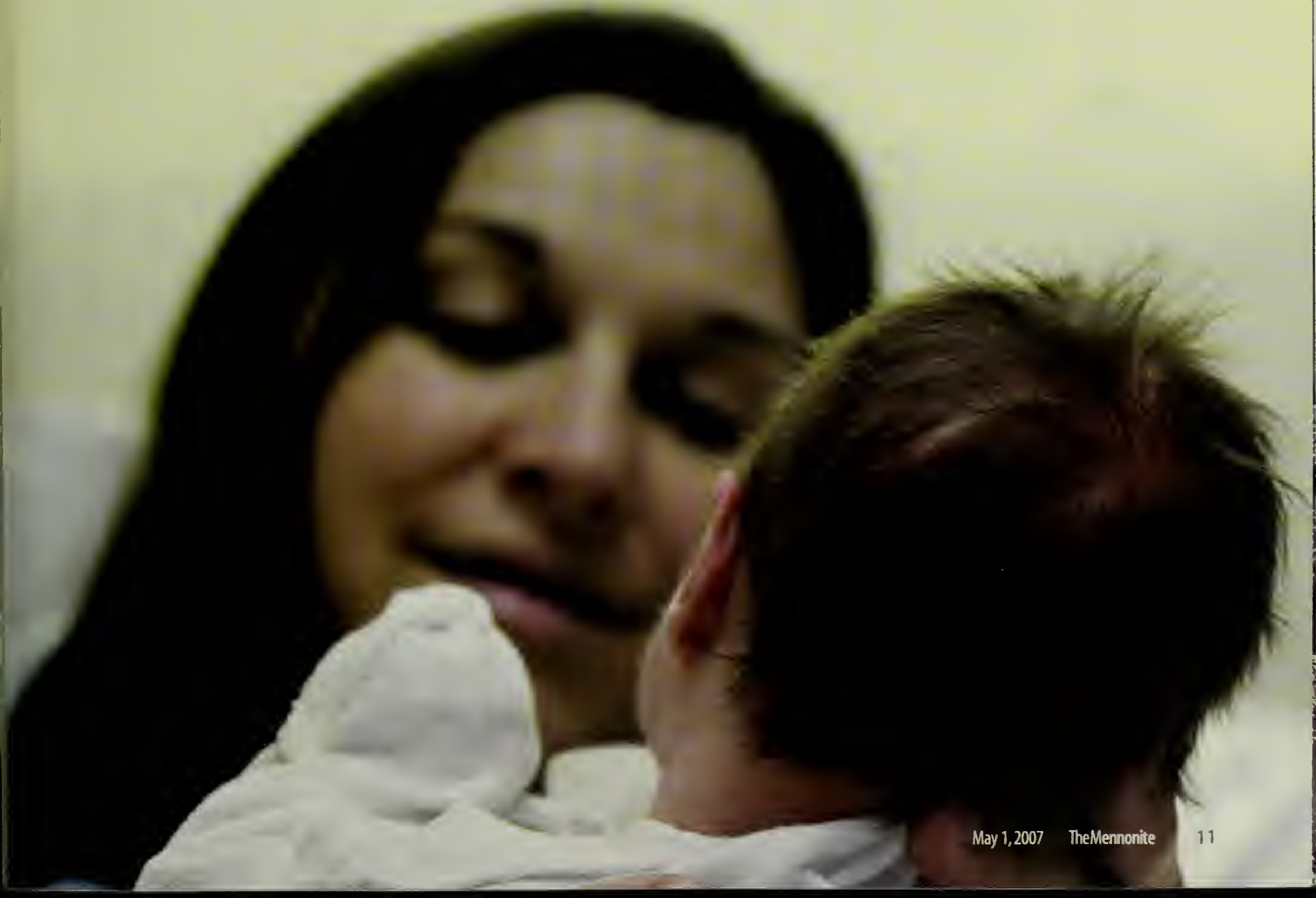
Why does the great congregation
gasp in one stunned breath,
fall silent, and begin to weep?

The young mother
is speaking softly
at the funeral of her uncle,
a beloved man, so kind
he seemed too good for the world
with his Down syndrome eyes
and slow sweet speech.

The young mother
is remembering
her Uncle Allen's urgent
earnest question
as she was about to give birth:

If you have a baby like me …
will you keep him?

Barbara Esch Shisler lives in Telford, Pa.



Helpful lessons from Weight Watchers

Blessed hunger, extravagant grace

by Margalea Warner

Can hunger be blessed? Can grace be extravagant? One Sunday in worship at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City, I came forward holding high a bowl. I said, "This is my Winnie the Pooh cereal bowl. It stands for my hunger after companions for the journey who take grace seriously and themselves lightly. One of Pooh's sayings is, "It's more fun to talk with someone who doesn't use long, difficult words but rather short, easy ones like, 'What about lunch?'" I long to look at my shadow self—that fat lady inside my head with her committee of negative voices—and say, Let's all of us go out to lunch.

I told the congregation my story: I can remember looking at the squat shadow my body cast on a sunny day and thinking, Boy, am I fat. Yet that same day at dusk I looked at my thin shadow and wondered how I got to be such a string bean. At times I've looked at people heavier than I am and thought smugly, I'm glad I don't look like that. At times I've walked with friends who have anorexia nervosa and wondered, How can she possibly think she is fat? Ultimately I know God created us in every shape and size and loves us as we are. The only way I can truly live that self-acceptance is to join others on a journey to a healthy body and a wholesome relationship with food.

I can't imagine the journey of faith without someone to lean on. I need those who will accept me as I am yet love me enough to call forth a new person. I need the stories of people who have gone before me, people who are honest about their hungers and needs and addictions. One place I hear such stories and find such companions is at Weight Watchers meetings.

I hear stories like those told by middle-aged sisters Joyce and Janette about how some diets they have tried have been "food jail." In their 30-some years in the program they can remember the strict rules. No cookies. No cake. No donuts. You have to eat fish and liver. One night Joyce woke up and realized she hadn't had her mandatory serving of fat and got up and ate a tablespoon of mayonnaise by the light of the refrigerator door. When Joyce

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> **I need those who will accept me as I am yet love me enough to call forth a new person.**

told her group leader about that, she was scolded for eating between meals. Janette is quick to admit they both had lost weight initially on this restricted diet. But when they got to their goal weight and could eat sweets again, they ate donuts by the dozen. All the weight came back. Law and ungrace didn't lead to a transformed lifestyle.

Portion control: I hear words of grace from leader Harriett, who tells us that not only are we allowed to eat the foods we love, but that we will fail if we don't find ways to do so. The secret is to do so mindfully and with portion control. I hear words of wisdom from leader Marla, who says, "Be careful what you tell yourself, because you will become what you believe. Feed yourself positive self-talk and you will do positive things."

I turned to Weight Watchers because I didn't eat out of hunger. Instead I ate because I was anxious and afraid, because I was angry and defensive, because I wanted consolation or celebration or numbness. I ate from mouth hunger and heart hunger, not from belly hunger. I still find myself eating when I am stressed by conflict. Once in church during a controversial meeting that was to be followed by a potluck, the moderator asked for questions and my burning one was, "Is that sauerkraut I smell?"

At meetings I've learned to stop myself before gorging, to pay attention to the acronym HALT, which stands for Hungry Angry Lonely or Tired. I've learned to notice that when I think I'm hungry for crunchy food like potato chips, it could be that my real longing is to chew someone out. In that case, instead of eating, it would be better to express anger directly. I've also paid attention to times I want to turn to comfort food like macaroni and cheese because what I'm really hungering for is nurture and love from family and friends. And when I want those Hershey kisses I may really want a hug. Then again, I could simply want chocolate.

Weight loss discipline can apply to spiritual discipline. My weight watching companions and I try to keep the discipline of writing down each day what we have eaten and for how many points. We also weigh in weekly. It keeps us accountable. Similarly I try at the end of each day to write a "weigh in" of the ways I fell short in living mindfully and the ways I was nourished by God.

Demons: Is it an exaggeration to say the support I receive at Weight Watchers is like the support some people receive from Alcoholics Anonymous? Or is Weight Watchers a superficial social group focused on something trivial? My friends in support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous say they rank their demons: some smoke cigarettes, some overeat, but as long as they are clean and sober they're grateful for deliverance from self-destruction. While I hesitate to go as far as saying that overeating has made my life unmanageable or that I am powerless over food, I do turn to food like a drug and can be miserable because of it.

Weight Watchers takes a less spiritual approach than 12-step programs such as Overeaters Anonymous. Weight Watchers was started in the 1960s by Jean Nidetch, a housewife who invited friends into her home to brainstorm ways to lose weight together. It turned out helping people lose weight was good business, and now there are franchises all over the world. Business or not, God has used the leaders and members of this group to point me in the direction of grace, balance and accountability. Anything that blocks God's grace in our life is of concern to God, and anything that can restore right relationships is blessed by God.

Isaiah 55:2 (NIV) asks, "Why spend money on what is not bread and your labor on what does not satisfy?" When your real inner hunger is for right relationships, spending money on food that you're going to eat alone and in shame won't satisfy.

Anything that blocks God's grace in our life is of concern to God, and anything that can restore right relationships is blessed by God.

When your true thirst is for justice, you'll quench it more by serving free lunch than gulping down a grande latte with whipped cream. And God invites us to an extravagant lunch. Isaiah 55:2 (NIV) continues, "Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good and your soul will delight in the richest of fare." If I can allow the bowl of my hunger to wait empty instead of filling it with food that does not satisfy, how richly I hope God will fill me. Yes, Pooh, there will be plenty of honey for all of us.

Margalea Warner is a member of First Mennonite Church of Iowa City. She is a lifetime member of Weight Watchers and has been freed from food jail, enjoying cooking and eating out with friends as well as walking 10,000 steps a day.

Lessons from the Samaritan woman in John 4

An unlikely

by Nancy V. Lee

Parents do not hold her up as a model for their daughters. She is given no name; we know her only by a place common in her area. Yet, as the accounts in *Through the Eyes of Another: Intercultural Reading of the Bible* (Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2004) show, her surprising story reaches across time and cultures.

Hans de Wit writes: "She can be found in the catacombs. I see her walking the rice fields in India. … She can be found … in the Netherlands of the golden age, in the work of Rembrandt and others. Under Neapolitan trees she meekly talks to Jesus; against a background of blue mountains she stands in a Chinese landscape; high Indonesian palm trees look down upon her."

What happened to transform this nameless woman with a less than circumspect life into a missionary for the ages? All we have is the bare bones of her story in John 4:1-42.

The setting is an age long before indoor plumbing or the Internet. People have to carry jars to a well for water, and messages are either spoken or handed over as written documents. The time, early in the ministry of Jesus, is not the darkness of the visit of Nicodemus but the long shadows of early evening at the end of a dusty day.

The place is not a school, synagogue or the temple in Jerusalem where one expects to find a rabbi teaching but a stone well outside the city. Here an open conversation between two people can go unheard and continue uninterrupted.

This well is in Samaria—with all that means in terms of the division and hostility between the people who live there and the Jews who live south of them. While to the Jews the Messiah would be a descendant of David who would restore true worship in the temple in Jerusalem, to the Samaritans the Messiah would be a descendant of a prophet like Moses (as promised in Deuteronomy 18:18-19) who would restore true worship on Mount Gerizim in the old northern kingdom. Further, according to 2 Kings 17, the worship of these Samaritans was tainted by the worship of false gods after the return of the remnants of the northern tribes from Assyrian captivity.

The characters are mainly a Jewish man named Jesus and this nameless woman, a native of Samaria. And all they do is talk—alone. There are no listeners—except the much later receivers of John's account and us, standing far behind the curtains in the distant future.

This woman alone at the well wants to find out what kind of Jewish man would cross social, historical and religious barriers to ask a favor of the likes of her.

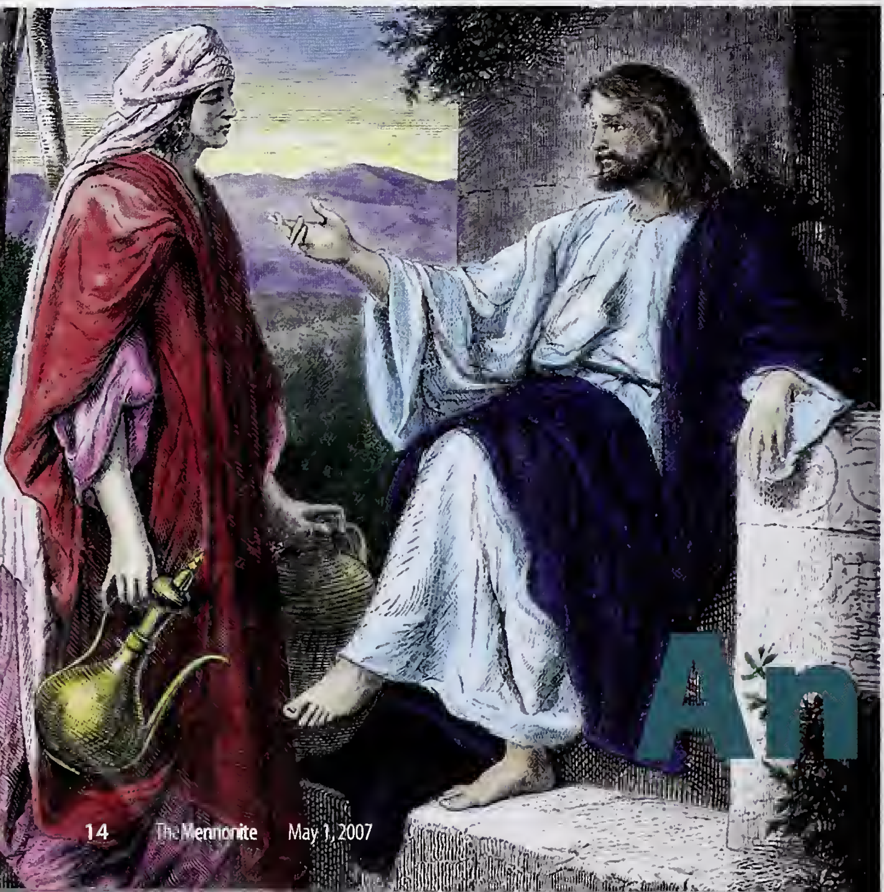
Ancestor Jacob: As the conversation reveals, the woman knows a great deal about God, at least the God of the books of Moses. She is aware of her Israelite ancestors, familiar with the prophets, waiting for the Messiah and able to raise the theological questions of her people. Indeed, her early reference to the provider of this well, Ancestor Jacob, is of great significance because it places her and her people under God's covenant with Abraham.

Yet through the three chapters in John before this narrative, we readers know the single most important thing that the woman does not: who this tired, thirsty Jewish man is.

The story is so familiar and the conversation so matter-of-factly recorded that it is easy to miss the suspense in both her search and his. This woman alone at the well wants to find out what kind of Jewish man would cross social, historical and religious barriers to ask a favor of the likes of her. His quest, if we look back a bit in John, is an urgent search by One with a mission who is not accepted by his own—a search for those who will receive him. His is surely a thirst that no amount of water from a literal well can quench.

Master teacher—or missionary—that he is, Jesus begins, after his tiring journey on foot this hot day, with the best of contextual requests: "Give me a drink." Then he works quickly at moving the conversation from the literal water to the "living water" he has to offer.

In reply, she extends her search for his identity by asking if he is greater than Ancestor Jacob.



KarenWhimsy.com

With the revelation that Jesus knows all about her, she moves even closer to a recognition of who he is by seeing him as a prophet—who can tell her all things—and by asking him about one of the most significant tenets of Samaritan theology: where he stands on the place of true worship.

In his answer, Jesus authoritatively supports the claim of the Jews to be the legitimate bearers of the covenant tradition, but he goes on to declare that neither the Jews nor the Samaritans are correct in limiting the worship that God seeks to a geographical place. God, who is spirit and is therefore not limited to place or time or people, seeks worship in spirit and truth. (This, we readers will remember, is surely the perspective of the Word of the universe in John 1.)

Clearly the woman now suspects that this Jesus, who knows so much, might be the Messiah.

With his simple assertion, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you," Jesus—with the cooperation of his listener—now completes another miracle, an even greater miracle than his turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana, for by the end of this short conversation a life has been changed and a new mission born among an estranged people.

Telling the truth: The turning point for the woman seems to have been the shock of hearing her life story from this stranger—without condemnation. He simply compliments her for telling the truth about herself, then tells her the truth about himself, a truth she can now receive.

This second staggering revelation is more than the woman can keep to herself. She abandons her water jar and rushes from the well to her neighbors with the news that she has met a man who must be the Messiah because he has told her everything she has ever done. In contrast to the learned Jewish teacher, Nicodemus, this Samaritan woman has become not only a believer but an enthusiastic and successful missionary.

And Jesus? He is no longer thirsty or, to his returning, astonished disciples, hungry.

Surely it is an extraordinary story of blessings—for Jesus, for the missionary and for her townspeople, with whom Jesus stays for two days of teaching and acceptance and hope for all. However, as the following voices show, this story carries a variety of meanings, depending on its readers' situations.

A Chinese pastor: In this story I can see that Jesus crosses religious and racial barriers by talking with the Samaritan woman, even asking for some water from her. My biggest question, when I read this story, is how to communicate with and help others from a different culture. Jesus' actions and teaching in this story focus on sharing the gospel with the Samaritans by emphasizing that God seeks true worshipers everywhere.

A Japanese Christian woman: I see Jesus crossing many barriers: those of conventions, culture, gender, religion, ethics, geography, race, power and generations. I also sense many limitations and barriers in my life that could be destroyed by Jesus, and it is not so easy to share the gospel with others across barriers like gender. However, Jesus got rid of all the barriers the Samaritan woman had and transformed her into one who could share God's story and her experience with others.

I identify most with the Samaritan woman. I feel thirsty in various aspects of my life and want to receive the same living water from Jesus. God is the only one who fills all my needs, and I believe he is the Savior. Remembering what this woman did, I want to work for him and his people without hesitation. Once we receive the living water, we cannot stop sharing God's story out of joy.

Through the Eyes of Another reports what this story has meant to groups of people around the world. Here, summarized and paraphrased, is what I understand the Latino male prisoners in a Washington State jail to be saying about this story, as originally related by Chaplain Bob Eckblad:

Most of us think of God as being found in Catholic or evangelical churches and other religious places, or far away in heaven, looking at the earth from a distance. We don't think of his meeting us where we work or where we go for pleasure. As far as the Bible is concerned, we are afraid of what it says. We think it will confirm our worst fears: that we are damned because we cannot succeed at obeying the rules or that it will put new demands on us. We do not see the Bible as offering good news for us. We think of God along with the state, both of which have power over us.

Standing with Jesus, whose request shows total solidarity with us in our thirst, seems to challenge the entire system.

As we talked about the story of this woman who has had five husbands, we finally saw that Jesus comes to people right where they are, no matter what they're doing or if they've messed up.

In contrast to the learned Jewish teacher, Nicodemus, this Samaritan woman has become not only a believer but an enthusiastic and successful missionary.

Nancy V. Lee is a member of Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va.

nissional event

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Mom and

by Marathana Prothro

Love between mother and daughter does not depend on perfect agreement.

Last July 9—and every July 9—my mother, Mary Jane Furches, told me, "Twenty-five years ago today, I was in labor for 20-some hours trying to push you out into this world."

I knew I was a few weeks late and that the hot Tennessee summer weighed heavily on my nine-plus-months-pregnant mother. But she accomplished one of the most womanly triumphs known to humanity: She gave birth.

And now she's waiting for me to do the same.

When I reflect on how our relationship has evolved, waiting is one thing she's done plenty of. She waited for me to walk and talk. Kindergarten, high school, college, my first job, engagement. I was married at 23. Worrying finished, right? Try walking past the baby clothes at Target with her and tell me it's over.

The thing is, our relationship will never be over. Not even death will quiet the dynamics of our mother-daughter relationship. One day, I'll tell my kids, "You know your 'Mamaw' grew up in a Southern Baptist church in Tennessee. She never missed a Sunday. When the church doors were open, her family was there."

Our relationship will never be over. Not even death will quiet the dynamics of our mother-daughter relationship.

I'll be saying this to justify staying home from church on a rainy, sleepy Sunday, rationalizing she went to church enough as a child for the next two generations to miss a Sunday or two. It's odd how beliefs evolve and are shared from generation to generation.

Tricky waters to navigate when you're figuring out what you believe and how you fit into the world as a young adult. I like to think of it as the Bermuda Triangle of family. It may be best to not tempt fate by entering the tumultuous waters where one stream meets another and no one who enters leaves alive.

Maybe parents don't think about things this way. Maybe they assume their children agree with them on everything because that's what's expected. Maybe some parents enviably have relationships that are entirely transparent, and hurt feelings aren't an issue. Kudos to you.

Or maybe your children are sorting through their own ideas.

It's no secret to my parents that we don't view everything the same. I was raised Mennonite Brethren and realized as a teenager I didn't agree with the theology shared at church. My beliefs aren't perfectly aligned with my parents' beliefs.

It's no secret to my parents that we don't view everything the same.

Some days it's as simple as saying "What harm does recycling and taking care of the Earth do if global warming isn't happening?" Other days, it's as painful as sitting through an episode of the O'Reilly Factor without screaming. And, she likes McDreamy; I like Dr. Burke. We both love Grey's Anatomy.

I've finally figured out it's OK to tell Mom I think the clothes she chooses for me don't fit who I am. We don't talk about our different views, and we've never talked about our not talking about this. Will we have a knock-down drag-out battle over it someday? Maybe—I hope not. I bet we don't. Who'd want to fight when you could be talking about Oprah or baking cookies? Not me. Not my mother. We know we love each other. And for now, that's enough.

We're more alike than I realized. I've always been my father's daughter—same nose, same gait, same temper. Mom was helping sew a couple of skirts, and as she took my measurements, I sighed. She looked up at me and said, "I'm sorry, Honey, you've got my DNA. You're built like me." Yes, I am destined to be built like her. But I'm not destined to be her, think like her or relive her life. I'm glad we're different, and I'm glad I don't have to agree with her for her to love me.

Marathana Prothro is a member of Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan. This article originally appeared in the March/April issue of Timbrel, *the magazine of Mennonite women.*

me, forever

Marathana on her wedding day with her mother

Strong nonviolence

Rich H. Meyer works for Christian Peacemaker Teams.

In his Feb. 20 editorial Everett Thomas made an effort to distinguish "force" from "violence," with specific attention to policing, and in the March 6 issue Vern Rempel took another look at the place of force "to stop harm from happening." I'm glad we are looking at the complexity of the choices we face in responding to violence in our world.

It can help to rule out some options. Rempel rejects violence, "both in perpetration and in response," and he begins and ends with love ("respond generously and with great and abiding empathy for those who have suffered violence … nurture lives of community building, overcoming the ways of fear and rage"). Rempel also offers a clear limitation: "[W]e may need to use force … but with restraint … force is different from killing. … We may take penultimate action to restrain … ultimate fate rests with God."

Our tradition can give us still better guidance in setting limits. Consider the phrase our churches taught to young men preparing to face draft boards 65 years ago: "I will not use force in any way that permanently, mentally or physically injures anyone." Clear limits that still leave room for forceful intervention.

Of course, beyond simply setting some boundaries, our God offers us the power to act in strength as Jesus did; following Jesus means learning the loving way of strong nonviolence. Choosing the way of the cross in fact gives us many more options. Rempel includes this also in his exhortation to never underestimate the power of God for transformation and reconciliation.

Thomas introduces confusion when he defines violence as "force with intent to injure." Does intention really distinguish between force and violence? Following that line, Thomas says that "whether or not we intend to injure and abuse another country distinguishes our country's actions as either force or violence." This would allow any kind of aggression, as long as the perpetrator means well. And who determines the intentions? (President Bush says he invaded in order to help Iraqis.)

Thomas refers to a "continuum of force" used by the police in the town where he lives. But at least twice in his discussion of escalation of force, Thomas betrays a misunderstanding of the responsibility of a person using violence. Consider the word "required" in these two sentences: "The officer is free to jump to any level of force at any time required by the situation. … But shooting another person—required by the action of the perpetrator—leaves them in a moral dilemma."

Is the police officer "required" by the situation or by the actions of another person to use lethal violence? People choosing violence often want to blame someone else. Who better to blame than the victim of their violence? From the police officer to the president, this falsehood is used to excuse "our" violence by blaming it on "them." Was President Bush "required" to invade Iraq? Did an Iraqi dictator have control of U.S. foreign policy? Do hoodlums determine the policy on lethal violence of the local police? No. Each person choosing to use violence is responsible for that choice.

This is precisely what is wrong with that "continuum of force" used by many law enforcement authorities and self-righteous superpowers: It tries to evade the responsibility for the consequences of the underlying commitment to control, dominate and win at any cost. Yes, any cost, because the person adopting that paradigm is deciding they will escalate the violence as far as they have to in order to control the other party, even to the point of killing them. People are willing to escalate to lethal violence then try to shift responsibility, saying they "had to do it." The force continuum is just an upward spiral of violence for people who see only the choice between winning and losing.

It doesn't have to be that way. Many law enforcement agencies have sensibly taken back some of their responsibility by adopting policies against continuing "hot pursuit" car chases when these chases endanger the fugitive and the populace. This is an example of someone in authority deciding not to escalate, that winning is not worth the cost. I hope our local police can be taught to use similar judgment with the force continuum, remembering that every escalation is a choice, not a requirement.

But for us who believe, the Spirit can guide us with far more creativity. Love that overcomes hate may not win in the eyes of the world; praise God we don't have to win. Jesus already did that. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Get ready for San José**—Gordon Houser

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Pro Emmental

Täuferjahr opens in Switzerland

Commemorative year draws attention to history of Anabaptism

Combined choirs of the Mennonite and Reformed churches of Langnau, Switzerland, welcome guests at the opening ceremony of Täuferjahr 2007 on March 24.

A March 24 service at the Protestant church in Langnau, Switzerland, marked the beginning of the Anabaptist commemorative year in this canton's rural Emmental region.

More than 200 events will recall the persecution of Anabaptists—divided mainly into Mennonites and Amish today—that began during the Reformation and did not end until the early 19th century. They include plays, exhibitions and excursions throughout canton Bern and neighboring cantons in northwestern Switzerland.

"We, as the indirect successor to the political authorities of that time, regret the injustices done to so many and the suffering caused," said Werner Luginbühl, president of canton Bern's government, during the opening ceremony.

It was in this part of Switzerland authorities brutally repressed the Anabaptists, who challenged the 16th-century reforms of Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli, one of the Swiss leaders of the Reformation. For their refusal to accept the new state-run church and insistence on adult instead of infant baptism, Anabaptists were subjected to imprisonment, torture, expulsion and execution.

Persecution continued at least until 1810 in Switzerland but lasted only a few decades in the Netherlands, which also had a sizeable and influential Anabaptist community.

"We can't undo what was done, but society can learn so that the mistakes are not repeated," said Luginbühl. "The focus of this event should be on building bridges."

Official reconciliation between Switzerland's Protestant and Mennonite churches happened in the 1970s, but Anabaptist history has remained a "taboo subject," said Fritz von Gunten, principal coordinator of commemorative events.

"We'd prefer to talk about success and positive aspects of the past rather than dark chapters," said von Gunten. "There are Anabaptists living in the Emmental today who are well integrated into their communities, [but] the population knows very little about their history."

Von Gunten said he has been overwhelmed by the number of projects submitted for inclusion in the official program designed to raise awareness of the past.

"It is amazing what public attention the 'year of the Anabaptists' generates," said Markus Rediger, Mennonite World Conference Executive Committee member for Europe, who was at the opening ceremony in Langnau. Many newspapers published news of the event, and bookstores that usually don't sell Anabaptist books are ordering an Anabaptist guide, published in German. French and English translations are in progress.

The country's existing Anabaptist community is uneasy about suddenly finding itself in the spotlight, said Paul Gerber, president of the Swiss Mennonite Conference. The challenge for Mennonites today is to remain true to their faith despite this new attention, he said.

Gerber reminded the audience that while Anabaptists no longer suffer because of their beliefs, people are still being persecuted in Switzerland. His statement was a veiled reference to the fate of asylum seekers who are not burned or drowned like the Anabaptists of the 16th century but are often rejected by authorities.

There are 14 Mennonite congregations in Switzerland, with about 2,500 members, and an estimated 600,000 descendants of Swiss Anabaptists live in North America.—*Dale Bechtel for Mennonite World Conference*

While Anabaptists no longer suffer because of their beliefs, people are still being persecuted in Switzerland.
—Paul Gerber

Anabaptists gather on the Internet

But online groups cannot be a substitute for real church communities.

In ages past, religious seekers might have gathered in caves, public squares or cloisters to talk about faith. Their theology developed in upper rooms, sanctuaries, meetinghouses, restaurants and cafés. Add the Internet to that list of holy places.

Some Web sites, such as Young.anabaptistradicals.org and Jesusradicals.com, are intentional about creating a space for faithful conversation. MennoLink has for years provided opportunities for education and discussion.

Other sites, not specifically Christian, are being used to create virtual communities where believers can connect to others who can support and challenge them in their faith. Networking is rampant on Facebook.com (where more than 400 registered facebook members have joined a new Anabaptist grouping and more than 1,900 are in a Mennonite grouping), Xanga.com, Myspace.com and across the blogosphere as thoughtful Anabaptists publish their intimate theological thoughts and musings on faith on potentially billions of computer screens worldwide.

Blogs and forums can provide support, challenge ways of thinking, worship God and offer inspiration—the same things found in most physical communities. Which leads to a question: Can virtual communities be a substitute for the physical world?

The answer, according to many active bloggers and online denizens, is no.

"Our communities we build online are shadows of real communities," says C. Wess Daniels, a Fuller Theological Seminary student attending Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church and blogger at gatheringinlight.com.

Around a dozen people connected with the Pasadena church are now blogging, Daniels says. They read each other's sites and comment, starting discussions that can continue face-to-face. The key, he says, is face-to-face.

"[The Internet] is only to help facilitate real community in some way," Daniels says. "Actual community does happen online. … But if it stops there … it's the same as having a pen pal. It's not the same as living in community with that person. We do need physical contact. We need to be able to see people face to face. We need to be able to hear voices.—*Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network*

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Executive Minister

Mennonite Church British Columbia seeks applications for the position of Executive Minister. The Executive Minister will:

1) foster and inspire the vision of Mennonite Church BC.
2) provide pastoral support to Pastors and Congregations.
3) give implementation and organizational leadership to programs of Mennonite Church BC.

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Processing of applications will commence May 15, 2007 with a potential start date for the position of Sept. 1, 2007.

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Health assembly on mission, identity

Speaker emphasizes seeing people as people, not as 'clients with deficits.'

The theme "Mission-Driven Ministry" permeated three plenary sessions and 38 workshops planned for 359 participants at the annual Mennonite Health Assembly, held March 29 to April 1 in Pittsburgh.

In the keynote address, Bill Gaventa, an expert on developmental disabilities from New Brunswick, N.J., emphasized the importance of seeing our service through the eyes of the people we serve rather than through the more prevalent prism of people as clients—with deficits who need our services.

We should look at everyone, Gaventa said, including people with disabilities, as people first who have gifts to share and needs to be met in a spirit of mutual exchange.

Gaventa said that too often we define ourselves arrogantly over against "the other." He cited as example the elderly, the insane, the disabled and—worst of all—the retarded. He said he finds this statement, "I may be old, but I'm not disabled," especially insensitive because the connection between the two conditions is closer than the speaker realizes.

"There is a huge difference between identity and diagnosis," Gaventa said. In our country, we tend to associate everyone's identity with job, gender, cultural background, religion and region of the country, he said, and we dehumanize others by identifying them by their diagnoses, deficits and disabilities.

Gaventa said that individuals with disabilities, like everyone else, desire a place to live that is their own, a way to contribute to society, and other people in their lives who can give and receive love.

Gaventa encouraged the caregivers at Mennonite Health Assembly simply to be with those in their care—the word "assessment" literally means "to sit next to," to listen to their hopes and to build relationships around their gifts, not their needs.

In a second plenary presentation, Lee Snyder, recently retired president of Bluffton (Ohio) University, spoke on "The Audacity of the Church." She said providers of health and human services represented at Mennonite Health Assembly "are guided by enduring Anabaptist values, working out those values in contemporary and creative ways."

The roots of contemporary health-care practice are embedded in visionary decisions of the church after World War II, Snyder said. She used the development of mental-health-care institutions as a case study for the way the church has developed institutions to serve others.

"The thread that runs through this story is the unflagging commitment to press the mission and identity question," Snyder said.

In a second case study, Snyder reviewed ways Bluffton University has understood its Mennonite identity. She said that Bluffton is best described as an "open circle" institution, with its Anabaptist and Mennonite values informing all aspects of the university while welcoming all people.

"We are called to be part of something much larger than ourselves, we commit to loving service. The audacity of the church in carrying out its respective ministries is possible because this is not our work but God's," Snyder said.

In a final plenary session, J. Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., contrasted the culture of death associated with the Greco-Roman world in the first century with the message of healing and hope associated with the first Christians.

"Healing in the ancient world was framed by an idolatrous story of empire and by manipulated gods," said Kraybill. By contrast, Kraybill said, early Christians embodied the story of the cross and were willing to attend to the ill.

"If there was any single mark of Christians in the first century, it was that they had overcome their fear of death," he said.

Participants contributed $1,792 during a Sunday morning offering to assist the Union Project, a community development activity associated with Pittsburgh Mennonite Church.

Mennonite Health Assembly is a collaboration of MHS Alliance, Mennonite Chaplains Association, Mennonite Medical Association, Mennonite Nurses Association and Mennonite Mutual Aid.—*Stuart W. Showalter for MHS Alliance*

Systems Developer

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) has an opening for a systems developer to design, develop, and implement information systems in an IBM iSeries Plex, RPG, Web, and PC LAN environment. Qualified applicants will have a bachelor's degree or equivalent experience in applied or analytical science; experience with/ability to learn programming languages, systems analysis, design, and project management; strong interpersonal and communication skills.

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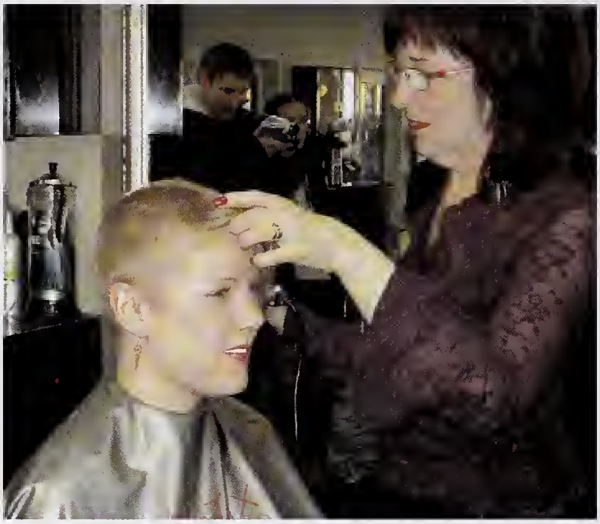
Canadian church leaders shave heads

Fund-raiser nets $6,000 for Mennonite Central Committee's AIDS work.


Dorothy Bartel

Saskatoon hair stylist Gail Robinson shaves Mandy Neminishen's head to help raise funds and awareness for Mennonite Central Committee's projects supporting children orphaned by AIDS.

On a frosty morning in early February, Mandy Neminishen headed to a hairdressing salon that had offered to shave her head at no cost.

While some friends told Neminishen she was crazy, others stepped up to support her. By the end of the day, four people had shaved their heads, and more than $6,000 had been raised for Mennonite Central Committee programs supporting children orphaned by AIDS.

Neminishen, newly married and in her second year of studies at Bethany College, Hepburn, Sask., says she was inspired by another student, Alison Berg, who had shaved her head as a fundraiser for AIDS orphans in 2004. She says her reaction to this was, "Good for her. I could never do that."

Then, 18 months ago, something changed. She felt as if images of children orphaned by AIDS were all around her. She felt a passion for the children and wanted to help them. When she read stories about orphans, she thought to herself, "What if that was my child?"

She also thought about Alison Berg's response to help children orphaned by AIDS. "And then I realized, I think I can let go of my hair. This is worth it," she says. With the decision made to shave her head, she set out to use the event to raise as much money as she could.

Neminishen promoted the head shaving in her congregation in Saskatoon, Cornerstone Church, and in her hometown of Hepburn. She wrote letters to everyone she knew, giving examples of how even donations of $4 or $5 could make a difference in the life of a child. She was also invited to tell her story to local media outlets.

Her husband Shane and pastors of Cornerstone Church, Russell Reid and Steven Thiessen, said they would also shave their heads. When Thiessen, the youth pastor, jokingly said he would have to be paid a lot of money to shave his head, someone offered an extra $1,000.

We want to encourage young people and not snuff out their passions. —Mandy Neminishen

In the weeks following the dramatic haircut, Neminishen has found that her bald head is a great way to talk to others about AIDS and its impact on children.

In what has been a particularly cold and snowy winter in Saskatchewan, her lack of hair raises questions. At a recent soccer game, the questions about her short hair led into a great discussion with other players and coaches about the problems faced by AIDS orphans each day.

Later, she was also able to tell her story at a large youth conference. In addition to the money she was able to raise for children in other parts of the world, Neminishen recognizes an equally important strength in her experience.

"We want to encourage young people and not snuff out their passions," she says. "If other people get passions, we want them to know that the church will support them." She says she learned something else from her experience: "I love short hair."—*Sarah Adams of Mennonite Central Committee*

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MCC continues tsunami rebuilding

More than two years after the Indian Ocean tsunami devastated coastal communities in Sri Lanka, an escalating civil war is creating similar humanitarian needs in the country, according to Nigel Kenward, a Mennonite Central Committee tsunami response coordinator. Kenward says the physical devastation of the tsunami is being repaired as Sri Lankans move into new houses and other buildings constructed with aid money from many sources, including MCC.

However, Sri Lanka's 24-year-old civil war is worsening, Kenward says. In the last 15 months, the war has driven an estimated 300,000 people from their homes.

"The physical damage of the tsunami over most of the island is getting healed," he says. "But in terms of the conflict, the effect that [the civil war] is having on the island as a whole is just appalling."

In response, MCC is funding a project that will provide leadership training, water and sanitation facilities, vocational training and small loans to people who have been displaced by the civil war. MCC is providing $20,000 to a partner organization, Lanka Evangelical Alliance Development Service (LEADS), to carry out the project in four villages in eastern Sri Lanka.

> **In terms of the conflict, the effect that [the civil war] is having on the island as a whole is just appalling.**
> —Nigel Kenward

The Sri Lankan civil war began in 1983 as a rebellion by militants from among the country's Tamil ethnic minority. The rebels and the government reached a cease-fire agreement in 2002, but both sides have routinely violated it since 2005. Today, civilians in northern and eastern Sri Lanka are caught in a conflict that involves numerous armed factions and government forces.

MCC works mainly in Sri Lanka by providing three workers to serve with local organizations and providing funds to build houses for families that lost their homes in the tsunami.

Nigel and Rachel Kenward, from Lincoln, England, are MCC workers who coordinate tsunami recovery work for a partner organization, including job creation and home construction projects. Another MCC worker, Jodi Crossgrove, Archbold, Ohio, serves as a dairy consultant to farmers.

MCC's workers live in Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital, away from the front lines of the war. Kenward says visa restrictions prevent foreign workers from easily traveling to areas in northern or eastern Sri Lanka that are heavily affected by fighting. However, LEADS is building houses in eastern Sri Lanka with funds from MCC.

"It's incredible and just the grace of God that's allowing them to continue working there," Kenward says.—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee*

Young adults share visions, dreams

Ministry Inquiry Program participants discuss their church experiences.

I love the church, and I hate the church.” This sentiment was expressed in a variety of ways by Mennonite college students at a gathering held at Eastern Mennonite University, in Harrisonburg, Va., the end of March.

Students who already participated in the Ministry Inquiry Program or will do so this summer, as well as denominational and conference leaders, attended the meeting. MIP is a collaboration between Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite-affiliated colleges. It allows students to spend 11 weeks serving in a congregation and exploring their call to pastoral ministry.

During the conference, the 40 participants were invited to listen to and share visions of the church.

If we want the church to change, we have to change ourselves.—Paul Boers

Many simply asked: What does it mean to be in the world but not of it? How do we live faithfully as members of the kingdom of God while also living in a society that often doesn’t share the same values?

“Is church what happens Sunday morning,” asked one participant, “or is church what we do together?”

Steve Kriss, director of communication and leadership cultivation for Franconia Mennonite Conference, highlighted some challenges the Mennonite Church is facing as it becomes more diverse, including language and cultural barriers.

“I am convinced that it is going to be a struggle for those of us who are Euro-American to figure out how to live in a future that doesn’t look like us anymore. We are going to deal with privilege and responsibility and with issues of cultural understanding,” said Kriss.

Mike and Risha Metzler, who attend The Table, an emerging Mennonite congregation in Harrisonburg, Va., led a session and asked participants to share words or phrases describing their ideal vision of the church.

“Authentic,” said one. “Welcoming,” said another. In a few moments the list had been extended to include adaptable, Christ-centered, radical, life-giving and honest.

Risha Metzler said she thinks The Table is just “one way of doing church.

“We’re not saying, ‘This is the way church should be,’ but it’s exciting and energizing to me to begin to address the issue that church isn’t working for a lot of people. So what do we do with that as believers? How do we make this work for more people?”

During sharing times, many expressed a desire for a safe space to ask questions and express their doubts and frustrations.

Others expressed the need for the church to collectively deal with conflict.

“We all have disagreements on all kinds of issues, but we pretend that doesn’t happen on Sunday morning or say we can’t talk about these in church,” said one person.

Throughout the conference, students struggled with how to foster community, intimacy and accountability in their churches and engage the broader culture at the same time.

“The church is pulled in two directions,” said Paul Boers, a Goshen (Ind.) College student. “One is the desire to grow deeply and intimately in relationship with each other. And the other is to welcome anyone and everyone. Good relationships … take time [and] intentionality.”

“If we want the church to change,” said Boers, “we have to change ourselves.”

Aldo Siahaan, a leader of Philadelphia Praise Center, said, “Miracles come from movement. We need to keep moving toward God’s grace and toward his vision.”

Students and church leaders alike agreed that movement toward God’s vision for the church will result in the miracle of transformation in congregations.—*Lora Steiner for Eastern Mennonite University*

Church Relations Manager

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CALENDAR

May 6, ***Hesston College Commencement*****, Hesston, Kan.**

May 6, ***Bluffton University Commencement*****, Bluffton, Ohio.**

Des Moines Mennonite 50th Anniversary Celebration, Sept. 1 and 2, **Des Moines, Iowa.**

WORKERS

Assis, Nilson, ended a term as pastor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Reinholds, Pa., on March 31.

Blank, Bill, ended a term as pastor at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa., on March 25.

Diaz, Henry, was licensed and installed as minister of evangelism and outreach at Christ Fellowship, Allentown, Pa., on March 4.

Goodwin, Charles and **Priscilla**, assumed the role of camp administrators for Lakewood Retreat, Brooksville, Fla., on May 1.

Gordon, Jay Jr., was licensed and installed as associate pastor at Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale, Pa., on Feb. 25.

Horst, Barbara, was licensed as lead pastor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Reinholds, Pa., on March 25.

Roynon, Colin, was licensed as youth pastor at Holly Grove Mennonite Church, Westover, Md., on Jan. 29.

Rutherford, Richard, ended a term as pastor at Black Oak Mennonite Church, Warfordsburg, Pa., on Jan. 1.

Sanchez, Moises, ended a term as pastor at First Mennonite Church, Brooklyn, N.Y., on April 29.

Shenk, Harold and **Mary Grace**, ended terms as co-pastors at Hebron Mennonite Church, Hagerstown, Md., on Jan. 1.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Barnes, Aidan John, March 31, to Chris and Rachel Bennett Barnes, Denver, Colo.

Boschmann, Colin Michael, March 28, to Michael and Alice Harmon Boschmann, North Aurora, Ill.

Burkhalter Blosser, Clare Elise, Jan. 13, to Chris and Emily Burkhalter Blosser, Ann Arbor, Mich.

Byerly, Caleb Michael, March 7, to C.J. and Allison Mayer Byerly, Sarasota, Fla.

Diller, Hunter Daniel, April 3, to Phil and Kristie Pankratz Diller, Hesston, Kan.

Diller, Xavier Dietrich, March 19, to Jason and Rachel Diller, Bluffton, Ohio.

Estep, Caleb Thomas, March 22, to Brent and Kirsten Miller Estep, Johnstown, Pa.

Freed, Samantha Jean, Jan. 14, to Shawn and Wendy Jesiolowski Freed, Souderton, Pa.

Frey, Lotte May Everett, April 4, to Jerel and Leah Everett Frey, Lancaster, Pa.

Goerge, Lily James and **Sadie Marie** (twins), March 16, to James and Judy Stevens Goerge, St. Johns, Mich.

Graber, Riley Landon, Feb. 23, to Darin and Emily Tjernagel Graber, Wayland, Iowa.

Hildebrand, Liam Johnston, Feb. 24, to Michael and Altaira Johnston Hildebrand, Kitchener, Ont.

Hostetler, Lila Renee, March 23, to Brice and Suzy Bauman Hostetler, Bellefontaine, Ohio.

Hunsberger, Mikayala Rose, Feb. 16, to Kyle and Tina Jantzi Hunsberger, St. Louis, Mo.

Jones, Hope Renee, April 9, to William and Amy Jones, Goshen, Ind.

Kauffman, Sophie Renee, March 16, to Rudi and Ravonn Schrock Kauffman, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Kaufman, Callie Brielle, April 12, to Austin and Kari Krabill Kaufman, Wooster, Ohio.

Leaman, Aryel Dayle, Jan. 9, to Jeremy and Gabriela Leaman, New Holland, Pa.

Leaman, Logan Andrew, Dec. 1, 2006, to Justin and Dawn Denlinger Leaman, Lancaster, Pa.

Miller, Hayley Serina, March 12, to Ryan and Pam Miller Miller, Hartville, Ohio.

Mills, Matison Jolene, March 6, to Chad and Jessica Pullman Mills, Spearfish, S.D.

Myer, Annabelle Ruth, March 30, to Joel and Heather Gayman Myer, Millersville, Pa.

Nafziger, Colby Jay, Feb. 7, to Brendon and Susan Duerksen Nafziger, Goessel, Kan.

Nofziger, Kohen Matthew, April 5, to Matthew and Lynelle Richer Nofziger, Wauseon, Ohio.

Sandoval, Zyleyka Jamyla, Feb. 8, to Alexis and Graciela Sandoval, Reedley, Calif.

Sawatzky, Mikayla Rachelle, Feb. 27, to David and Tracey Regier Sawatzky, Bluffton, Ohio.

Stauffer, Avery Joseph, March 27, to Joe and Kim Metzler Stauffer, Lancaster, Pa.

Timmerman, Savanna Serenity Amalie, March 16, Larry and Nicolle Hofer Timmerman, Bridgewater, S.D.

Yoder, Seth Ryan, March 6, to Devon and Jennifer DeHart Yoder, Corvallis, Ore.

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MARRIAGES

Avendano/Shenk: Elizabeth Avendano, Columbus, Ohio, and Charles Shenk, Columbus, Feb. 24, at Columbus Mennonite Church.

Bontrager/Brodhagen: Terry Bontrager, Wichita, Kan., and Angela Brodhagen, Valley Center, Kan., March 24, at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Erb/Nisly: Hannah Erb, Hartville, Ohio, and Neil Nisly, Hartville, March 31, at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Landis/Saxton: Christina Landis, Lancaster, Pa., and Curtis Saxton, La Grande, Ore., March 24, at The Lord's House of Prayer, Lancaster.

DEATHS

Bargen, Eldon Kliewer, 76, North Newton, Kan., died March 29. Spouse: Helen Bartel Bargen. Parents: Bernhard B. and Esther Bargen. Children: Dale, Jan; four grandchildren. Funeral: April 21 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Bast, Beatrice Cookman, 81, Kitchener, Ont., died Feb. 17. Spouse: Herb J. Bast (deceased). Parents: Edward and Margaret Gooding Cookman. Children: Beverley Dasiewicz, Paul, Brenda Bast. Funeral: Feb. 21 at St. Agatha Mennonite Church, St. Agatha, Ont.

Brenneman, Floyd, 87, Kalona, Iowa, died March 31. Spouse: Louise Miller Brenneman. Parents: Manaas and Lydia Brenneman. Children: Kathy Walter, Kristen Brenneman; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 3 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Felder, Charles W. "Bill," 81, Shipshewana, Ind., died Feb. 13. Spouse: Ruth Boyer Felder. Parents: Charles R. and Bessie Mae Frame Felder. Children: Sandra Felder, Sheila Johnson, Theresa Felder, Steven E.; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; nine great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana.

Frey, Rozanne, 59, Morrison, Ill., died Feb. 4. Parents: Philip and Vada Shank Frey. Funeral: Feb. 10 at Science Ridge Mennonite Church, Sterling, Ill.

Grove, Grace Suter, 87, Harrisonburg, Va., died March 24 of heart failure. Spouse: Earl L. Grove (deceased). Parents: Eugene and Nellie Heatwole Suter. Children: Virginia Grove Weaver; one grandchild; three great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 27 at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, Harrisonburg.

Hofer, Paul E., 64, Bridgewater, S.D., died March 16. Parents: Paul and Annie L. Hofer. Funeral: March 20 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Hottenstein, Wayne B., 95, Manheim, Pa., died March 21. Spouse: Vera Kathryn Stauffer Hottenstein. Parents: Wallace M. and Mary Brubaker Hottenstein. Children: John Henry, Joseph S., Leanna Metzler; 10 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Burial: March 22 at East Petersburg Mennonite Church, East Petersburg, Pa.

Kerr, Lois Zehr Smith, 85, West Liberty, Ohio, died March 22. Spouse: Ralph Kerr (deceased). Spouse: James M. Smith (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Mary Lehman Zehr. Children: Karl Z. Smith, Dale W. Kerr, William W. Kerr, Drew R. Kerr, Elinor Joan Leffert, Elsie A. Chatelain; three grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 28 at First Mennonite Church, New Bremen, N.Y.

Klassen, Elsie Elizabeth Loewen, 88, Mountain Lake, Minn., died March 21. Spouse: Arnold G. Klassen (deceased). Parents: John F. and Elisabeth Dick Loewen. Children: Darlene Dick, Wilma Schroeder, Ronald; nine grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 28 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Koehn, Earl Dwain, 85, North Newton, Kan., died March 25. Spouse: Louise Duerksen Koehn. Parents: Lawrence and Martha Schultz Koehn. Children: Dennis, David, Brent; three grandchildren. Funeral: March 30 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Kreider, Lisa Ann, 20, Sarasota, Fla., died March 12 from injuries sustained in a car accident. Parents: Lyle and Miriam King Kreider. Sibling: Jonathan Kreider. Funeral: March 16 at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Kropf, Betty Henderson, 75, Sterling, Ill., died Feb. 10 of cancer. Spouse: Milo E. Kropf (deceased). Parents: Earl and Lorene Brunk Henderson. Children: Jeanette Boettner, Merlin, Sally, Sandra, Ann Kurtz, Rita Miller, Dale, Noland; 24 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 13 at Science Ridge Mennonite Church, Sterling.

Kropf, Charity Pearl, 91, Canby, Ore., died March 19. Parents: Harvey and Polly Miller Kropf. Funeral: March 31 at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, Ore.

Markey, Jeffrey A., 54, Columbiana, Ohio, died March 17 of liver failure. Parents: Robert Markey and Dorothy Chapman Markey Mantzer. Children: Jason, Justin; one grandchild. Funeral: March 24 at Midway Mennonite Church, Columbiana.

Martin, Bertha Myers, 94, Shipshewana, Ind., died March 2. Spouse: Ivan C. Martin (deceased). Parents: Aaron and Clara Weldy Myers. Children: Dana, Joan Jantzi, Sherrill Vardaman, Bonita Kauffman, Brenda Loucks; 21 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 7 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana.

Martin, Della M. Lapp, 89, Niles, Ohio, died March 29. Spouse: Eber Martin. Parents: Stephen and Mary Miller Lapp. Children: Brenda Martin, Roger, Byron, Ward; nine grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 1 at Midway Mennonite Church, Columbiana, Ohio

Miller, Alta Yoder, 80, Uniontown, Ohio, died March 23. Spouse: Noah Miller. Parents: Abraham and Fannie Miller Yoder. Children: Wayne, Betty Jordan, Ruth DeLong, Larry; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 27 at Hartville Mennonite Church, Hartville, Ohio.

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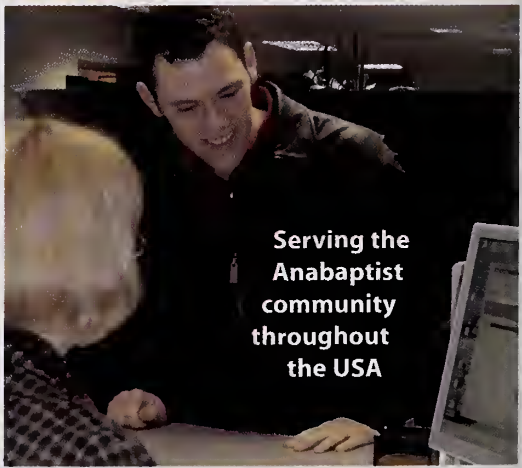
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Miller, Mary G. Roth, 96, Goshen, Ind., died March 24. Spouse: Perry G. Miller (deceased). Parents: Harry and Ella Burkhart Roth. Children: Sue Graham, Thomas, Roger; nine grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 27 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Mundy, Joan A. Burke, 74, East Greenville, Pa., died April 5. Parents: Eugene and Anna Harper Burke. Children: Dawn Clowney; four grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 9 at Souderton Mennonite Church, Souderton, Pa.

Nolt, Ruth E., 82, Talmage, Pa., died Feb. 12 of cancer. Parents: Enos and Mabel Mowrer Nolt. Funeral: Feb. 16 at Stumptown Mennonite Church, Bird-in-Hand, Pa.

Regehr, Elmer, 97, Inman, Kan., died April 4. Spouse: Dorothy Ratzlaff Regehr. Parents: George A. and Justina Klassen Regehr. Children: Gary, Dean; six grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: April 7 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Schwartzendruber, Fannie Bender, 86, Kalona, Iowa, died March 21. Spouse: Edgar Schwartzendruber (deceased). Parents: David M. and Nancy Jantzi Bender. Funeral: March 24 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Stockburger, Beulah Stamm, 95, Archbold, Ohio, died April 4. Spouse: Claire DeWitt Stockburger (deceased). Parents: Gustav and Priscilla Stuckey Stamm. Children: Carol Shenk, Ronald, Roger, Daryl; eight grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 7 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Swartley, Eva Ruth, 88, Lansdale, Pa., died March 17 of hypertension. Spouse: Paul Rittenhouse Swartley (deceased). Parents: Horace and Bertha Moyer Ruth. Children: Arlene Wambold, Richard, Jean Rodenberg, John; three grandchildren. Funeral: March 21 at Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield, Ohio.

Troyer, Verna Coblentz, 89, Middlebury, Ind., died March 30. Spouse: Harvey H. Troyer (deceased). Parents: Moses and Lizzie Beachy Coblentz. Children: Irene Love, Mose, Howard, Lloyd, Harvey Jr., Emma Hershberger, Jerry, Glenn, Wilbur, John, Rachel Chronister; 23 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 3 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury.

Unternahrer, Norman Lee, 62, Wayland, Iowa., died March 3. Spouse: Hortensia Irene Mendez Unternahrer. Parents: Noah and Barbara Wenger Unternahrer. Children: Susanna Zook, Jennifer Moreno, Eric. Funeral: March 8 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Unternahrer, Patricia Graber, 66, Wayland, Iowa, died Feb. 12. Spouse: Harold Unternahrer. Parents: Amos and Lorene Graber. Children: Chris, Carl, Shirley Hinh; 12 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 15 at Beatly Funeral Home, Washington, Iowa.

Wade, Genevieve Davis, 82, Sterling, Ill., died March 13. Spouse: Orville Wade (deceased). Parents: Frank and Clara Beckwith Wade. Children: Clark, Curtis, Crete LeFevre; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 17 at Science Ridge Mennonite Church, Sterling.

Whitehead, Donald, 90, Cambridge, Ont., died Feb. 2. Spouse: Muriel Whitehead (deceased). Parents: Harry and Genevieve Kislia Whitehead. Children: Anne Andrew, Gordon, Jim; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 6 at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.

Winkler, Verena, 93, Reedley, Calif., died April 4. Parents: Albert and Mary Niswander Winkler. Funeral: April 10 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Yoder, Ruth Benner, 91, Souderton, Pa., died March 2. Spouse: William Keeler Yoder (deceased). Parents: Webster and Hannah Brunner Benner. Children: Lester, Gladys Alderfer, Marie Leatherman, Ruth Scott, William; 17 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 9 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Zook, Sandra Sue Bousman, 65, Corbett, Ore., died Feb. 17 of metastatic breast cancer. Spouse: Leo Daniel Zook. Parents: Robert Edward and Wilma Jean Anderson Bousman. Children: Jeffrey Clay, Robert Scott; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 24 at Portland Mennonite Church, Portland, Ore.

"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

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To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.

Youth ministry opportunity. **Salem Mennonite Church**, a rural church near Tofield, Alta., is seeking a ***youth pastor***. Qualifications: minimum of a Bible school diploma, musical capabilities an asset, have vehicle, willing to work "unusual" hours." The salary will be commensurate with the successful candidate's experience. Forward their resumés to: Carla Fendelet, SMC, Box 56, Tofield, AB TOB 4J0, Fax 780-662-0106; email cgfen@telus.net.

Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore.; positions beginning August 2007. Western seeks ***female dorm leader*** for the high school dorm program. Responsibilities include mentoring students from various cultures and planning and supervising their weekday activities. Western seeks ***weekend dorm leaders***, one male and one female, to manage the high school weekend dorm program and promote a positive Christ-centered community. Leaders will plan and implement all weekend activities and meals with approximately one weekend off each month. Closing: May 28. Contact Beth Wadlow at 503-363-2000 (866-343-9378) or bethwadlow@gmail.com. Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 to local students and students from around the world. Located on 45 acres in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience. Western seeks exceptional candidates with a heart for youth and sharing Christ.

Join us in Arizona. **Goldensun Community** offers integrated living with people with disabilities. Volunteers live in our homes as housemates, not staff. We offer ***service opportunities***: Goldensun day program, adult education tutoring, driver/maintenance, homeless shelter, community center, retirement center, MCC Thrift Shop, etc. Contact: Marlin Hershberger, mdhersh@cox.net; Goldensunonline.org.

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks 80- to100-percent-time ***resource person*** for Lancaster Mennonite Conference-EMM partnership for church planting. Experience required in church planting, evangelism, strategizing, vision coordination and development, relationship building, coaching and administration. Begins July 1. Contact Jeanette Hunt at 717-898-2251 or jeanetteh@emm.org by May 10.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking qualified applicants for the following position: ***executive director of center for justice and peacebuilding***. Strong proven record of leadership/management. MA and five-plus years experience required. Ph.D. preferred. Knowledge of and skills for working in an academic environment preferred. The person will have an Anabaptist/Mennonite faith orientation and commitment, active participation in a church community. Key requirements include financial acumen, personnel management, team-building, problem-solving, strategic planning and visioning, policy development and implementation. Send a letter of application, a resumé and three references to: hr@emu.edu or mail to human resources, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

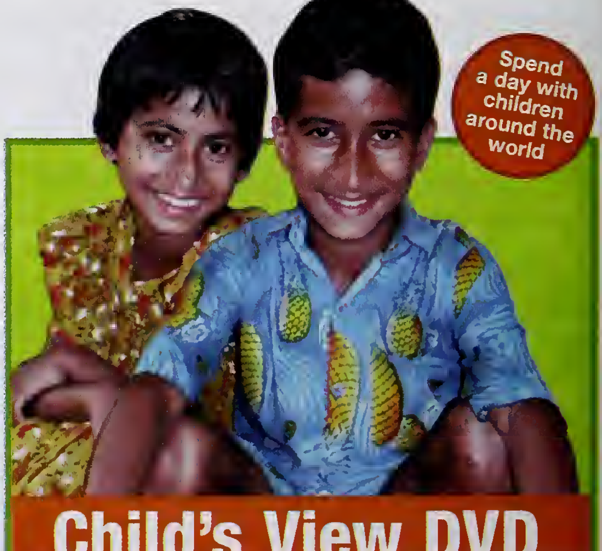
Camp Mennoscah, a Kansas prairie camp 45 minutes west of Wichita, seeks two volunteers for a two-year commitment to fill the positions of (1) full-time ***maintenance/ grounds assistant*** for camp buildings and grounds and; (2) full-time ***food service manager/office assistant*** who will manage the kitchen during summer camps/rental groups and assist in the office during the off season. Volunteers will assist with rotational weekend hosting responsibilities. These positions are open as of May 1 or until filled and will receive Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) stipend and benefits and will be part of the Hutchinson MVS unit. Camp Mennoscah is owned and operated by Western District Conference of Mennonite Church USA. Interested applicants may check online at mennowdc.org, MennoniteMission.net or contact Mennonite Mission Network: 1-866-866-2872 or Immanuel5@MennoniteMission.net.

Goshen College seeks a full-time ***American Sign Language assistant professor*** to begin in the 2007-2008 school year. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Hesston College seeks applicants for the position of ***admissions counselor***. Qualifications: communication and organizational skills, commitment to Mennonite higher education and familiarity with the Mennonite church. The counselor will develop and implement a recruitment plan, build relationships with top prospects and applicants, telemarket, travel and represent Hesston College at churches and high schools. Bachelor's degree preferred. Experience working with high school youth a plus. Position available early summer. To apply, send resumé and references to Clark Roth, Vice President of Admissions, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062. For more information email clarkr@hesston.edu or call 800-995-2757. Review of applicants begins immediately and continues until the position is filled. Equal opportunity employer.

Goshen College is inviting applications for a ***biology professor*** (half-year sabbatical, Spring 2008) with special emphasis on teaching biology service courses for non-majors. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

***Director of ministry development*, Community Mennonite Fellowship**, Milton, Pa. He/she provides servant leadership to a team of skilled and motivated volunteer leaders of nine ministry departments in a congregation of 275. Responsibilities include: leading ministries in visioning, implementation and evaluation; overseeing short-term ministry initiatives; promoting servant leadership in the congregation and linking volunteers to ministry needs. This full-time position requires excellent skills in organization, planning, motivation and communication, and a desire to make a difference for God. Prior experience and success in an organizational setting are essential. Send resumé to office@cmfmilton.org.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Central Christian School is seeking a ***full-time, upper-level high school English teacher*** to begin August 2007. Central Christian School, Kidron, Ohio, www.ccscomets.org. Contact Henry Beun at 330-857-7311 or hbeun@ccscomets.org.

The Greencroft Foundation is seeking a ***director of development*** that will provide leadership, strategic direction, management and coordination for all fund-raising efforts. The Foundation currently serves the Greencroft Goshen and Middlebury campuses, with plans to expand to Southfield Village, South Bend and other managed communities. The professional we seek will create fund-raising strategies that increase support from individuals, corporations, foundations and other sources. He/she will play a key role in identifying, cultivating and soliciting major donors for capital and annual gifts. The director will work in close collaboration with Greencroft Communities' VP of marketing and development, senior leadership, key volunteers and board leadership to achieve fund-raising goals. Event planning, grant writing and budgeting responsibilities included. Five years experience in fund-raising and a bachelor's degree is required; master's degree preferred. CFRE certification also required. Supervisory experience helpful. Compensation and schedule: salaried, 40 hours per week, Monday-Friday; occasional weekends and evenings, full-time benefit package, including health and dental insurance. Apply at Greencroft Retirement Communities, 1225 Greencroft Drive, P.O. Box 819, Goshen, IN 46526. Contact Greencroft Human Resources at 574-537-4084 with questions.

Director of youth and young adult ministries, **Community Mennonite Fellowship**, Milton, Pa. He/she will serve with skilled and motivated volunteers to lead and oversee junior high, senior high and young adult ministries. This full-time position, serving 60+ youth and young adults, requires strong experience and demonstrated ministry success and a desire to make a difference for God. Responsibilities include: serving, discipling, leading, planning, motivating and networking with students, volunteers, parents and young adults. Send resumé to office@cmfmilton.org.

Wildwood Mennonite Church, a very small active church in Michigan's scenic Upper Peninsula, seeks ***half-time pastor***. Congregation values: spirituality, worship leadership and preaching, church growth and counseling. Position available immediately. Reply to Tim Lichti, Indiana-Michigan Conference Minister, 212 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-3723.

Bethel College seeks an ***administrative assistant*** to the director of alumni relations. This is a full-time position requiring an experienced professional with strong interpersonal and organizational skills. Extensive knowledge of Microsoft Office software and skills in database management required. Associate's degree acceptable, bachelor's degree preferred. Familiarity with Bethel College alumni and constituency a plus. Submit letter of application, resumé and three professional references with email contacts to: Terri Headrick, director of human resources, Bethel College, 300 E. 27th St., North Newton, KS 67117, or theadrick@bethelks.edu. See detailed job description at http://www.bethelks.edu/careers.

Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore., seeks a ***volunteer project coordinator*** for the construction of an 8,000-square-foot academic center. Duties include overseeing construction and being a liaison between Western, the architects and the general contractor. Please contact Darrel White at 866-343-9378 or djwhite@westernmennoniteschool.org. Western is located on 45 acres in Oregon's scenic Willamette Valley.

Goshen College seeks a three-fourths-time ***assistant campus minister*** to begin in August 2007. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

English conversation teachers needed. **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

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My father's generous orthodoxy

Sara Wenger Shenk is an author and serves as associate dean and associate professor of Christian education at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

My father celebrated his 89th birthday in April. He fits well the classic biblical description of Moses: "His sight was unimpaired and his vigor had not abated."

Dad has not slowed down. With family help he harvested four tons of grapes from his half-acre vineyard last summer, selling many of the beautiful bunches from his front yard. He cultivated a huge garden, growing hundreds of sunflowers, squash, pumpkins, melons, tomatoes. He picked bushels of apples and peaches from his trees.

At our annual family week at the beach, Dad still body surfs the waves, a thrill he's loved ever since he was a boy. In turn, he taught all his children and grandchildren a profound respect for the ocean—its power and its delights.

At age 80 he journeyed with several of his children and grandchildren to the 50-year Jubilee celebration of the founding of the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia, remembering how the name for this new church (Christ the foundation) was chosen by young Ethiopian believers in his home in Nazareth, Ethiopia. He had served as the first Mennonite Bible teacher there after Mennonites began relief work following World War II.

I could go on with the trailblazing work of my father. Most invigorating is the way his reading of the Bible stays engaged with the changing culture. When Lancaster Conference dress code flew in the face of Ethiopian customs, he stood up to the bishops on behalf of the indigenous church. Later, in Pennsylvania, when his children complained about their lackluster Bible teachers, he initiated three imaginative programs for connecting youth and young adults with the church: Christian Youth Associates (focusing on the arts), Keystone Bible Institute and the Paul-Timothy mentoring program. He supported his church's decision to call a woman for lead pastor—a first in Lancaster Conference. He provides companionship with other parents of homosexual children. After viewing Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*, he gave a donation that made it possible for his church to "go green" as they expand their meetinghouse.

Now this summer, he and Mother are joining an intergenerational family trip to the land of the Bible he loves. I well remember how, as soon as the translation Good News for Modern Man came out, Dad eagerly bought each of us a copy, exulting in its down-to-earthness. He now reads The Message over and over and invites us to read it with him. He tells Bible stories with animation, bringing them off the page. Last Christmas, when he told of Mary's visit from an angel, he used The Beatles' song "Let It Be."

This year, on his birthday, it dawned on me that I'd forgotten to send a card. I comforted myself with the plan to send one late, and an email saying that it was on the way. Before I'd done either, an email arrived from him. I include it below, with his permission; a gracious wisdom extending across the generations.

"Dear Family,

"Our God of love in his marvelous grace has given me 89 wonderful years of life and a most dear and loving companion for almost 63 of these. In my wildest dreams as a younger man I never thought I'd stay around this long. In addition to all this I have eight precious children with their spouses, 15 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. In recent years we have lost dear Chet [oldest son] and dear Nelson [son-in-law] to cancer, but we are happy that both of them found in Jesus a Savior and a hope of eternal life. Now what a joy we have as we look forward to welcoming two beautiful young women into our family when two of our wonderful grandsons have their weddings this spring and summer.

"You dear ones bring us much joy as you answer Christ's call to follow him. Let's keep in close touch with Christ Jesus. This will take constant prayer, listening for his words of instruction, fellowshiping with God's people, and open eyes for opportunities to serve in God's peaceable kingdom. You and I know all this, but sometimes we need encouragement.

"My life has had times of trial and testing, but upon reflection it has gone from one great experience to another. In some ways life seems to be getting better all the time. I recognize the possibility, however, that the next stage may be more difficult, but I'm sure God will be there to help in time of need. I have no premonitions but live one day at a time. As long as I live I want to continue telling others of God's love through Jesus, our crucified and risen Savior.

"Mother and I eagerly look forward to a good summer, including the trip to the Middle East in June. You are all most welcome when we are home to pay us a visit, enjoy Mother's good cooking and look over the vineyard and garden. Let's pray for each other. Our daily prayer for each of you is that you serve faithfully in the place God has for you.

"With much love, Dad, Daddy, Grandpa, Chester. TM

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

Eyes Wide Open: Looking for God in Popular Culture by William D. Romanowski (Brazos Press, 2007, $17.99) is a revised and expanded edition of a book that has been one of the most-used Christian college textbooks on popular culture. All the chapters have been updated with fresh examples from the world of film and popular music.

Searching for Sacred Ground: The Journey of Chief Lawrence Hart, Mennonite by Raylene Hinz-Penner (Cascadia and Herald Press, 2007, $19.95) tells the story of a remarkable man and the two peoples who formed him. Hinz-Penner combines her personal reflections with biography and history to show the tension and beauty of the Cheyenne-Arapaho people and Mennonite faith and how both live out peace.

Consider Jesus: Daily Reflections on the Book of Hebrews by Donald R. Jacobs (Herald Press, 2007, $11.99) holds up the book of Hebrews like a mirror and shares daily reflections on how he lets Jesus speak in and through his life.

America's Battle for God: A European Christian Looks at Civil Religion by Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz (Eerdmans, 2007, $20) presents a portrait of how the United States is perceived throughout the world and how the current religious factor in American politics can look like a pious cloak thrown over national selfishness.

How to Become a Saint: A Beginner's Guide by Jack Bernard (Brazos Press, 2007, $12.99) encourages less "doing" and more resting in God's grace. Bernard acknowledges the struggles of the spiritual journey and shows how to cultivate a relationship with God.

Tortured Wonders: Christian Spirituality for People, Not Angels by Rodney Clapp (Brazos Press, 2006, $14.99) is available in paperback. Clapp reminds us that we are "in-between" creatures—neither entirely body nor entirely spirit, neither apes nor angels—and that orthodox Christian spirituality "never gives up on the body."

The Luminous Dusk by Dale C. Allison Jr. (Eerdmans, 2007, $14) charts the effects in Western society of a loss of wonder. The book's eight essays call readers to a life of sustained wonder, open to God and connected to God's creation, a life that chooses divine ascent over our culture's reflexive mediocrity.

Why Study the Past? The Quest for the Historical Church by Rowan Williams (Eerdmans, 2005, $15) opens up a theological approach to history, an approach that is both nonpartisan and relevant to the church's current needs.

Door to Silence: An Anthology for Christian Meditation by John Main (Canterbury Press, 2006, $8.99) is a collection of quotations to encourage slow, prayerful reading. It offers not only a guide for an interior personal journey but practical wisdom for every area of our lives, our work and our relationships.

Stories: How Mennonites Came to Be by John D. Roth (Herald Press, 2006, $10.99) is a straightforward, accessible narrative that introduces contemporary readers to the Mennonite story.

Crisis: Responses to the Captivity of the CPT 4, edited by Tricia Gates Brown (Herald Press, 2007, $17.99), describes the repercussions of the kidnapping of four workers from the Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation in Iraq on Nov. 26, 2005, the killing of Tom Fox on March 9, 2006, and the release of Jim Loney, Norman Kember and Harmeet Sooden two weeks later.

thank you donors!

Thanks to all who contributed to *The Mennonite*'s operating budget in the past year. You enabled us to conclude our most recent fiscal year on Jan. 31, 2007 with total contributions of $43,543. We are deeply grateful for this financial support as well as for the many encouraging notes that accompanied your contributions.

For those interested, The Mennonite, Inc., posts its audited financial statements each year at www.TheMennonite.org (click on "About *The Mennonite*"). We will also send you a copy of the financial statement by mail if you call 574-535-6053.

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Anna Groff

Passing along comfort

As a mother comforts her child,
so I will comfort you;
you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.—Isaiah 66:13

When I was in fifth grade, I wanted to raise rabbits more than anything. When my first doe got pregnant, I did everything I could during the countdown to labor.

I read up on rabbit pregnancy, fed the mother fresh greens, provided straw for her to make a nest and constructed a "birthing hut" for the doe to use on the big day.

Finally the day arrived. On my way out to the hut I noticed white fuzz (the hair the doe pulls from herself to make a nest) all over the cage. The bunnies had arrived, I said to myself. But I spoke too soon.

My eyes fell on a pink bunny, small enough to fit in my palm, that had fallen partially through the wire cage and was hanging by its neck, strangled. I stepped back, but my foot landed on a second dead bunny that had fallen out of the cage. No bunnies survived that morning.

I ran back to the house, where my mother consoled me while I cried. She hugged me before she went out to see the cage.

Showing comfort is a gift we should share with one another, regardless of our sex or age.

My mother explained that the small opening of the birthing box made it impossible for the pregnant rabbit to enter, so she gave birth outside the box, and the bunnies slipped through the bottom of the wire cage.

I felt devastated. I had waited so long and now had nothing to show. My mother helped me make a shoebox coffin to bury the dead bunnies in, and we constructed a small slate tomb marker.

She explained that disappointing things happen beyond our control, and my "career" in rabbit-raising wasn't over just because of this loss. Most importantly, my mother did not make me feel shame or embarrassment at my mistake and the bunnies I lost. She helped me process my grief and provided ways for me to move forward to an optimistic future.

I continue to experience God's comfort through my mother—just as Isaiah says—during disappointing or discouraging moments in life. I've taken risks and failed or felt unsure of my purpose; my parents' words have given me courage. But showing comfort is a gift we should share with one another, regardless of our sex or age.

A temptation when attempting to comfort someone is to judge or critique the pain they feel. We may want to say, "This person messed up; they deserve to feel this way," or something along those lines.

Another temptation we face is the desire to fix the individual's problem quickly instead of showing genuine comfort. This often stems from our own discomfort with others' pain. However, my mother didn't try to tell me that I did nothing wrong or to forget about the bunnies I lost.

To truly show comfort—like Jesus did to children, women and men—means we must openly acknowledge and validate the other person's feelings of disappointment and offer a supportive presence.

Other people who show God's love include spiritual guides, close friends, mentors, co-workers, supervisors and relatives. When we face failure or loss, these are the people who sit with us in silence, who wait patiently for us to process our feelings and who offer words of encouragement without judging.

These people know when to ask prompting questions and when to remain silent, acting as a supportive presence. They also show comfort over the long haul and remember to check in by sending emails or notes months—even years—after the loss or disappointing event.

At times the ability to show comfort and support comes naturally, often with a dear friend, loved one or child. Other times it does not. Let's remember the ways we have experienced comfort from others and pass along that love to those around us who need it.—*ag*

This article is available as an audio file at www.TheMennonite.org

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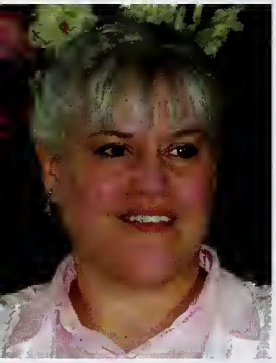
Singing our journeys



Donna Mast is co-pastor of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

As I write, a group of people from my congregation just completed a delightful journey of singing every song in the songbook *Sing the Journey.* We met for one hour almost every Sunday evening for the past three months, singing, on average, 11 songs per night. We didn't sing straight through the book, but our leader kept track of what we had sung to ensure we did sing each song sometime during the three months.

The group was fluid. Whoever wanted to come was welcome. If we couldn't make every Sunday, that was fine. Those who could play instruments were welcome to experiment and join in as they felt inspired. Sometimes we had a balanced group with strong voices to carry each part and sometimes not. Sometimes we had a lovely mixture of young and older voices and sometimes not. Always we had fun.

Today was the last day of the three-month exercise. We met for a carry-in meal, then sang until we were "sung out"—two hours instead of our usual one hour, and we sang 22 songs in that time period, exactly double our usual number.

Earlier today, during sharing time in a worship service that had focused on the Good Shepherd and God's tender provision and care for us, someone stood to say that she had noticed God's provisions for us through the music we had sung. One song's music came from the 1600s and the text from the 1200s, while another song was written in 1988. The woman shared how thankful she is for the centuries of music God provides.

There really is something powerful about music. One of our members struggles to remember, as dementia slowly takes over her thinking powers, yet the Lord has blessed her with songs that run through her mind and give her comfort and joy. When I see her during the week, she often asks, "Want to know what song is with me today?" Another member, who can no longer translate the words in his head into intelligible sounds from his mouth, can still occasionally sing along with the congregation on a Sunday morning. What power music holds as it serves to bring words once more to this man's lips!

I remember a book from the late 1970s called *The Singer,* written by Calvin Miller. It is an allegory of the Gospels, and music carries the story of God's love. The singer represents Jesus. The book begins with the Singer awakening with the song in his heart. The heavens call out to him to sing the song and say, "We never could have been without the melody that you alone can sing." But the Singer laments that his song is not the one the world wants to hear. Toward the end of the book, a madman is loosed from his chains and given a healthy mind by hearing the Singer's song. But the Singer is put to death for the singing, and the madman finds himself in chains once more. In despair, he suddenly hears the song, "In the beginning was the song of love." As the madman recognizes the voice of the Singer, he joins the song, and his chains unlock themselves and fall away.

The Singer, Jesus, will sing us all into freedom if we will but listen, learn the music and join the song. This reminds me of a song in *Sing the Journey.* "When long before time and the worlds were begun, when there was no earth and no sky and no sun … the silence was broken when God sang the song, and light pierced the darkness and rhythm began, and with its first birth-cries creation was born, and creaturely voices sang praise to the morn."

I am grateful for the power of music and the power of God's love.

This article is available as a podcast beginning May 15 at www.thementonite.org. Check out our new Web site.

TheMennonite

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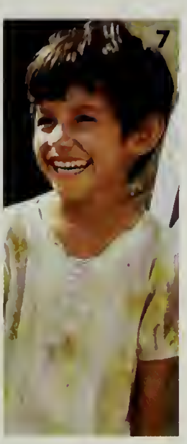

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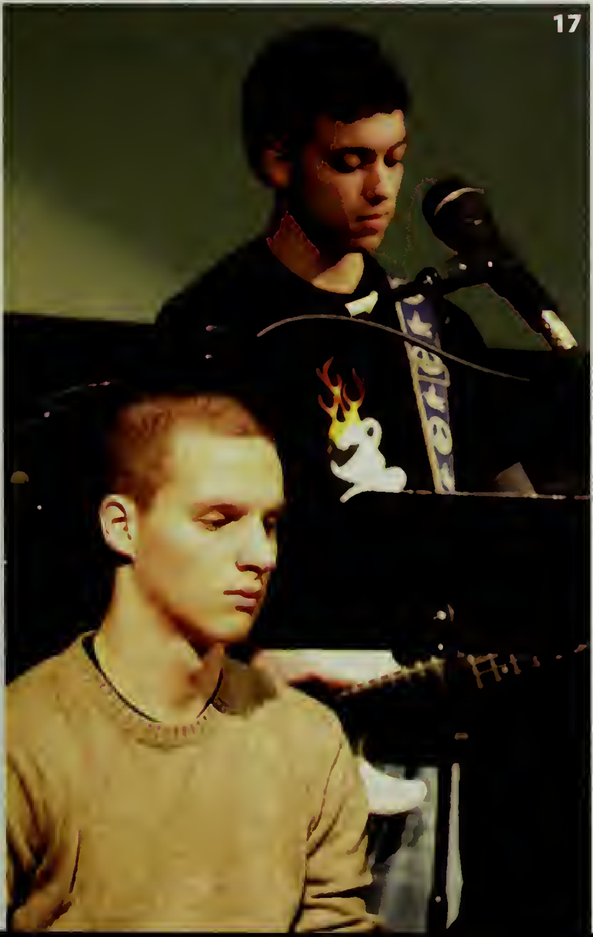

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Cover: Photo by Marathana Prothro

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

European Jesus not appropriate

The April 3 article "Victim and Victor" by John D. Rempel is good. However, I'm appalled by the illustrative picture used. This picture portrays a European or Caucasian Jesus. The picture on page 8 is a little more nebulous.

Evidence provided by psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark to the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of Brown vs. Board of Education demonstrated the negative effect of these types of images. Even the court agreed that these had a bad effect in overturning the "separate but equal" status of schools.

I hope that as the Mennonite church continues to carry the Anabaptist message around the world *The Mennonite* will be more aware and will discontinue giving us the European Jesus.—*Howard Piggee Jr., Rantoul, Ill.*

Editor's note: The illustration is intended to show the painting Rempel discusses in the article.

Means and ends same essence

Dennis Byler's article "The Myth of Justified Violence" (Feb. 20) is a perceptive and courageous statement. The implications for mission are enormous. Our mandate in mission is to call the world to join the movement of the wounded Lamb rather than join a movement that in the end will conquer evil with violence. Since means and end must be of the same essence, our missionary practices must coincide with the nonviolent Lamb's Way.
—*Byrdalene and Willis Horst, Formosa, Argentina*

Happiness not most important

"Everybody that you see smiling isn't happy" is a favorite saying that one of my relatives often uses. Is it true? We've all had our share of both laughter and sorrow. Although we naturally enjoy laughter more than tears, most of the wisdom we gain along the way we owe to the sad times. Yet many Christians are obsessed with the pursuit of happiness. What is our greatest need in life? Is it to be happy? We may long for a change in our circumstances, and sometimes that's what we get. But a changed life is our deepest need. Changed circumstances may make us happier, but a changed life will make us better, for it will make us like Christ. What a joy it is to know that we have Christ in us, the hope of his glory. Happiness is not the goal of life; godliness is.—*Bill Hartwell, Omaha, Neb.*

Lancaster Conference not unfaithful

I write this letter in defense of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference in light of recent letters that imply LMC has failed to live up to the 1995 Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective by not permitting the ordination of women.

Although actively involved with the (old) Mennonite Church, LMC never officially joined the Mennonite denomination prior to the organization of Mennonite Church USA. Joining Mennonite Church USA involved the decision as to whether the Board of Bishops would, for the first time in its history, bring its ultimate spiritual authority under another body (i.e. Mennonite Church USA). This created a dilemma for many in the conference; some were eager to join Mennonite Church USA, and others were reluctant.

To resolve the dilemma, conference leaders—with the support of denominational leaders—encouraged congregations and credentialed leaders to vote for LMC to join Mennonite Church USA as a conference but to understand that credentialed leaders and congregations could choose their level of participation. If they chose "no participation," they did not have to subscribe to the 1995 confession of faith but could embrace an earlier confession. "No participation" also meant that they did not have to send any financial support to Mennonite Church USA. A significant number of LMC congregations chose the category of "non-participation with MC USA."

When LMC considered the ordination of women, the bishops decided to honor those who felt it was unscriptural to ordain women and at the same time honor those who felt it was not only scriptural but mandatory to ordain women. In light of this reality, LMC has not been unfaithful in living out the 1995 Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective because not all credentialed leaders embraced or were expected to embrace this confession.—*E. Daniel Martin, Harrisburg, Pa.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Nearly 6,000 participants will attend San José 2007, the churchwide gathering to be held in California July 2-6. It is a time for members of Mennonite Church USA to worship together and do some business in the Delegate Assembly. As usual, the majority of those attending will participate in the youth convention; by May 7, 3,876 youth and sponsors were registered. This issue introduces some elements of the convention and can help readers pray for the work of the church before and during this time. We can pray especially for our youth, who will be invited to strengthen their faith or make a first-time commitment to Christ in the youth convention worship services. As Jacob Yordy says in his page 16 article, "Some of the best times of my life are the conventions; they are times when I can feel myself taking the path Jesus took, and I can feel him walking with me."—*Editor*

Give Lancaster Conference time

After reading the negative feedback regarding the decision of Lancaster Mennonite Conference not to ordain women, I believe it is time for people to step back and permit them to work out this issue in their own way. People should appreciate the fact that they chose to be a part of Mennonite Church USA and refrain from giving them a calling down for not being at the same point as other conferences. Even conferences that ordain women often have individual congregations that balk at having a female pastor.

Over the years, Lancaster Conference has made many changes. Years ago, it would have been unthinkable for women in that conference not to wear prayer coverings, to name one example out of many. Give them time to make their changes in their own time and manner.—*Kenneth Cressman, New Hamburg, Ont.*

Force and violence

I greatly appreciated the essay by Rich Meyer on "Strong Nonviolence" (Speaking Out, May 1). I was distressed by the Feb. 20 editorial because of the mistaken way it distinguished "force" from "violence" and because of the implications drawn from that distinction. Meyer's response makes the essential points in a clear, succinct way. Thanks. —*Ted Koontz, Elkhart, Ind.*

Connecting families

In April I attended the Connecting Families Weekend, a wonderful retreat for gays and their families. It is an event where there is no discrimination but rather acceptance and love for all who come. It is a place where some folks come to get strength and courage to go on with their lives, even though they have experienced rejection by families, friends and the church they love. This retreat is a mountain-top experience for me each year, especially the Sunday morning worship service.

I find it hard to understand why *The Mennonite* could not carry an announcement about Connecting Families. In the Mennonite Church USA Bylaws I read that one of the goals of T*he Mennonite* is "to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination."

The people at Connecting Families are some of those voices, but it seems to me you don't want them to be heard—or even to let others know that there is such an event as Connecting Families Weekend. This is very sad.—*Ruby S. Lehman, Harrisonburg, Va.*

I learned that this publication refused to print a classified advertisement for a recent Connecting Families conference in Pennsylvania. The reason given was that Mennonite Church USA bylaws for *The Mennonite*, as interpreted by your editorial staff, prohibits the magazine from publishing such an advertisement.

I am perplexed because, as I read the bylaws, I find these words: "The purpose of Mennonite Church USA is to participate fully in God's work of setting things right in a broken world. ...The mission of [the church] is to share with others the gift of God's love." I also read that the purpose of this magazine is "to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in the world." And one of the *The Mennonite*'s purposes is to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination.

Clearly only certain voices within Mennonite Church USA—presumably the ones who are more likely to financially support *The Mennonite*—are given a forum within its pages. Even minority voices willing to pay for an advertisement are shunned.

How sad that a weekend designed to offer welcome, understanding and Christian community to families of gay and lesbian sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers and children was determined by your staff to fall outside the purposes of Mennonite Church USA.—*Sandy Fribley, Goshen, Ind.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

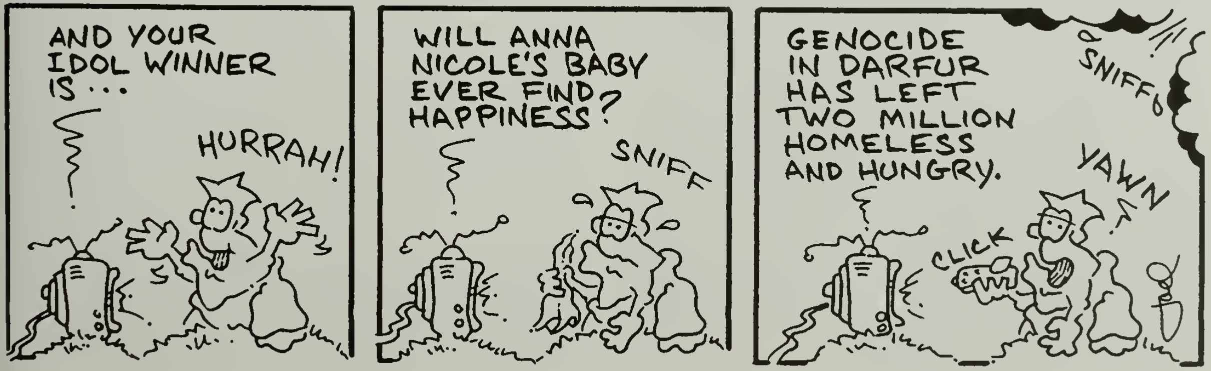
Is your congregation sending a delegate(s) to San José 2007? (42 votes)

- ○ Yes (76%)
- ○ No (24%)
- ○ Not sure (0%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Check it out
On May 15, *The Mennonite* launches its new Web site at www.themennonite.org.

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


AND YOUR IDOL WINNER IS...
HURRAH!
WILL ANNA NICOLE'S BABY EVER FIND HAPPINESS?
SNIFF
GENOCIDE IN DARFUR HAS LEFT TWO MILLION HOMELESS AND HUNGRY.
SNIFF
YAWN
CLICK

IN BRIEF

The Mennonite wins two awards at ACP Convention

The Mennonite won two awards at the annual Associated Church Press Convention, held April 22-25 in Chicago. "*The Da Vinci Code*, Martyrs' Mirror and the Faithful Church" by Gerald Biesecker-Mast (July 18) won an Award of Merit (second place) for Theological or Scholarly Article, and "Dwelling Among Those Who Hate Peace" by Arthur Paul Boers (Oct. 3) won Honorable Mention (third place) for Feature Article. ACP, at 91, is the oldest ecumenical Christian press organization in North America, made up of almost 200 publications, editors and writers.—*The Mennonite*

Mennonite congregations gather in Wisconsin

On April 29, four Mennonite congregations gathered for a regional worship service in southeastern Wisconsin. Hosted by the newly formed Milwaukee Mennonite Church, participants came from Madison (Wis.) Mennonite Church, Maple Avenue Mennonite Church, Waukesha, Wis., and North Suburban Mennonite Church, Libertyville, Ill. Participants learned more about the blessings and challenges of being part of an urban Mennonite church in this region.—*Paul Heidebrecht*

Tornado destroys Greensburg Church building

NEWTON, Kan.—A tornado destroyed the Greensburg (Kan.) Mennonite Church building and parsonage and leveled 90 percent of the structures of Greensburg, a town of 1,500, on the evening of May 4. The congregation is a member of Mennonite Church USA through its membership in South Central Conference.

The church building was built in the early 1970s. The congregation is celebrating its 75th anniversary in September. Jeffrey Blackburn is the pastor of the congregation, which has 81 members.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership asks people to pray for this congregation as its members renew their congregational life and community ministry.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership, in cooperation with South Central Conference, is collecting funds to assist the congregation. People may send checks to Mennonite Church USA, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Earmark checks for Greensburg Mennonite Church. People may also give by debit or credit card by going to www.MennoniteUSA.org and clicking on "give." Greensburg Mennonite Church is listed as a special project.—*Jim Schrag*

Joint Executive Committee signs covenant

CHICAGO—When the Joint Executive Committee of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA met here April 10-11, they confirmed what their two boards had already approved—a partnership covenant that recognizes that the two distinct national denominations have a strong and intentional partnership in areas of mutual interest.

Foundational documents—including the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and Vision: Healing and Hope—continue to reflect a unified body of believers. "We move forward in ministry, exploring and defining new ways of relating, sharing and serving, even as each national body continues to mature in its separate identity and mission," says the covenant.

Roy Williams, moderator of Mennonite Church USA and pastor of College Hill Mennonite Church, Tampa, Fla., and Henry Krause, moderator of Mennonite Church Canada and pastor of Langley (B.C.) Mennonite Fellowship, celebrated the signing of the covenant.

Current partnership ministries include Mennonite Publishing Network and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Leaders from the two national churches continue to intersect at many programmatic levels. In its meeting, the Joint Executive Committee approved a gathering for Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA leaders and constituents in Winnipeg July 8-10, 2008, on the theme of living faithfully as a contrast community in our global reality.—*Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada*

Bethel College photo

Bethel students plant trees for Service Day

As part of Bethel College's annual Service Day, six students joined professor of biology Jon Piper in completing the next phase of an ecosystem restoration project that began on the North Newton, Kan., campus earlier this year. Above, Jennifer Regier, left, a junior from Newton, Kan., and Kelly Yoder, a junior from Hutchinson, Kan., plant one of 175 bur oak seedlings the students and Piper put in the ground April 11. Piper and Priscilla Tang, a sophomore from Hong Kong, are in the background.—*Bethel College*

Muslims in Turkey murder three Christians

ISTANBUL, Turkey—In a gruesome assault against Turkey's tiny Christian community, five young Muslim Turks entered a Christian publishing office in the southeastern province of Malatya April 18 and slit the throats of the three Protestant Christians.

Two of the victims, Necati Aydin, 36, and Ugur Yuksel, 32, were Turkish converts from Islam. The third man, Tilmann Geske, 46, was a German citizen.

The following day the Turkish press reported that four of the five young men, all 19 to 20 years of age, admitted during initial interrogations that they were motivated by both "nationalist and religious feelings." "We did this for our country," an identical note in the pockets of all five young men read, Channel D television station reported. "They are attacking our religion."—*Eastern Mennonite Missions*

Ervin Gingerich created literary legacy

SCOTTDALE, Pa.—When Ervin N. Gingerich of Millersburg, Ohio, died April 9 at age 91, he left a

photo supplied

lief kits bring smiles to Iraqi children
ildren in Baghdad are happy to have their photograph ‹en with some of the supplies in a Mennonite Central mmittee relief kit distribution. MCC has committed an additinal $400,000 to help the growing numbers of Iraqis uprootfrom their homes by persistent violence and civil tensions. :C is sending seven shipping containers of material aid, luding 4,200 relief kits, 11,000 newborn kits, 22,000 school s and 16,000 blankets to Iraq to be distributed by local manitarian agencies working with vulnerable people in ghdad and surrounding communities.—*MCC*

literary legacy of more than 50 years in compiling 17 editions of the Ohio Amish Directory and a family of similar directories that appeared in Amish settlements across North America.

Gingerich's first Ohio Amish Directory was a small, self-published mimeographed edition that came out in 1953, and his last one appeared in 2005, a 932-page cloth-bound edition published by Carlisle Press in Walnut Creek, Ohio.

Steve M. Nolt, a Goshen (Ind.) College historian and author of *A History of the Amish* noted that two dozen similar directories have been printed in settlements from Wisconsin, Minnesota and Montana to Lancaster, Pa. "His directory of 1954 was the model for subsequent ones," said Nolt after hearing of Gingerich's death.

The basic model Gingerich developed was to list all the church districts (a district is roughly parallel to a parish or a congregation) by name and then list all the households within that district, including address, vocation, birthdates, marriage partners and date of marriage, and names of children, including birthdates and marriage partners.

The directories were used mainly by the Amish families themselves but were also used by researchers in religion, sociology and medical studies. Two of Gingerich's directories (1965 and 1973) were published in partnership with Johns Hopkins University.—*Levi Miller*

CPT joins call to end military aid to Colombia

COLOMBIA—On May 1, Christian Peacemaker Teams Colombia was one of dozens of organizations who released a letter to the U.S. Congress calling for a complete cessation of U.S. military aid to Colombia as that country's president, Alvaro Uribe, arrives in Washington seeking support for his military and trade programs.

Religious, peace and activist organizations and leaders from throughout the United States condemned the current U.S. aid policy for failing in its stated aims, reinforcing impunity for human rights violations and contributing to the displacement of millions of Colombians.—*CPT*

BikeMovement Asia begins in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia—From May 1 to July 1, six young adults from Anabaptist communities in the United States and Canada are riding their bicycles from Phnom Penh—through Vietnam, Thailand and Laos—to Chengdu, China. Touring participants of BikeMovement Asia (BMA) will connect with Anabaptist and other Christian congregations as well as individuals and communities affiliated and working with Anabaptist agencies. In the hopes of beginning to realize global community through intercultural engagement, they seek to understand the day-to-day realities of their hosts and observe the joys and challenges faced by the local churches of Southeast Asia.

The cyclists, Neil Richer, Adele Liechty, Nick Loewen and Tim Showalter from the United States, and Jesse and Nicole Cober Bauman from Canada, began their journey by meeting with Phnom Penh Mennonite Church members from May 1-5, before riding to Ho Chi Minh City.

BMA participants will report their experiences on BMA's interactive Web site, Bikemovement.org. BMA is committed to raising funds to help young adults from the global South attend international Anabaptist gatherings. Donations to this global sharing fund, as well as to the operating costs of BMA, can be made on the BMA Web site.—*Nicole Bauman and Sheldon Good*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Washington Office director named

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. has appointed Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach director of the MCC Washington Office. Lyndaker Schlabach, who serves as editor of the *Washington Memo*, worked in the MCC Washington Office from 1998 to 2003. She has a Master of Divinity degree from Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., and a bachelor's degree from Goshen (Ind.) College.—*MCC*

Israelis shoot Nobel peace laureate

On April 20, outside Ramallah, Palestine, Nobel peace laureate Mairead Corrigan Maguire and others attended the Second Bil'in International Conference on Nonviolence. They joined the Bil'in Popular Committee on its weekly nonviolent protest march to the Israeli "apartheid wall" to bring attention to the wall that separates Palestinians from their land and, in this case, cedes land to expand Jewish settlements in the area. With Israeli peace activists and internationalists from more than 20 countries, they made the trek to the wall. At the "security wall," Israeli Defense Forces shot Maguire with a rubber-coated steel bullet and tear gas. To see a video of the action, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qnu5qPXEmkc.
—SojoMail

Live the call!
¡Vive el llamado!

Ephesians 4:1-6 / Efesios 4:1-6

Get ready

Amy and Ben Bolanos sit on the front steps of their San Francisco home with daughter Dahlia Maria. Amy and Ben are members of San Francisco Mennonite Church and are an example of the young leaders the congregation encourages and relies on. Amy will present a youth seminar at San José 2007, and Ben is a worship leader for the Youth Convention.

for San José

by Gordon Houser

Mennonite Church USA members will come to California for the 2007 Delegate Assembly and convention July 2-6.

Total number of Mennonites in California:
About 3,600 members from 44 member congregations

When around 6,000 members gather in San José, Calif., July 2-6, it will be the first time Mennonite Church USA has held its Delegate Assembly and convention on the West Coast. Not since 1991 for the former Mennonite Church (in Eugene, Ore.) and 1971 for the former General Conference Mennonite Church (Fresno, Calif.) has there been a major meeting of our members on the West Coast.

According to Conrad Kanagy's Church Member Profile (see Feb. 6 issue), only about 6 percent of Mennonite Church USA members live in the West. Nevertheless, a plethora of vibrant congregations are living out their faith in that region. Southern California alone includes congregations representing at least a half-dozen language groups.

Closer to San José are congregations in Fresno, Reedley, Paso Robles and, closest of all, San Francisco. All are part of Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference, official hosts for the event, which also includes Mennonite Church USA congregations in Arizona and Nevada.

San José 2007's theme, "Live the Call," is based on Ephesians 4:1-6, which explores multiple themes relevant to members of Mennonite Church USA and the call to joyfully follow Jesus into the world.

An important part of every convention is worshiping together. Adult worship leaders for San José 2007 will be Maribeth Troyer of Phoenix, Ariz., and Rod Stafford of Portland, Ore. Youth worship leaders will be Ben Bolanos of San Francisco and Rachel Gerber of Denver.

Music leaders for the adult worship services will be Tom Harder of Wichita, Kan.; Helen Hudgens of Evanston, Ill.; and Brother George Makinto of Palos Verdes, Calif. Jeremy Kempf of Goshen, Ind., will lead music for youth worship services.

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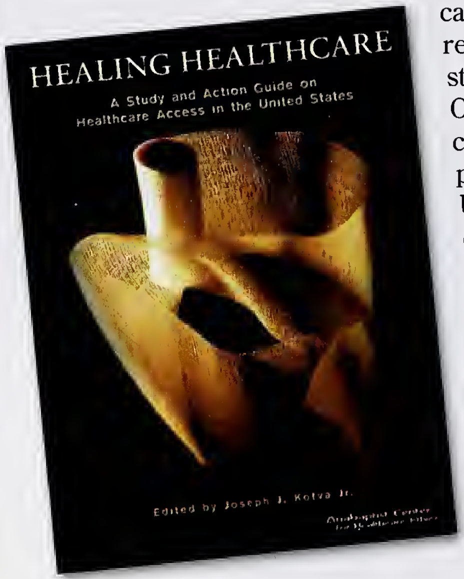
Delegates to San José 2007 will look at several issues. Perhaps the most high-profile issue will be a resolution to work toward a plan for providing health insurance for Mennonite Church USA pastors (see April 3, page 20).


HEALING HEALTHCARE
A Study and Action Guide on Healthcare Access in the United States
Edited by Joseph J. Kotva Jr.
Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics

Health-care access: Delegates at Charlotte 2005 discussed a health-care access statement that came to delegates with specific actions removed, following feedback from a study process before the assembly. Out of the discussion at Charlotte came a list of three priorities. The top priority was for Mennonite Church USA members to be "better stewards of our own health." The second priority was for health-care access for pastors and church workers. Third was advocating for public policy changes.

That second priority is a focus of the resolution coming to delegates this year from Mennonite Church USA's health-care access program. Glen Miller, the director of that program, told members of the denomination's Executive Board and the Constituency Leaders Council in March that "70 to 100 of our pastors are uninsured." He went on to ask, addressing the third priority: "How can we advocate for change unless we take care of our own?"

The resolution coming to San José 2007, which is subject to change, states, in part: "That as a denomination, we are committed to providing basic health insurance for all eligible pastors. That we request the Executive Board to oversee the development and implementation of a plan whereby all congregations of Mennonite Church USA participate together in an arrangement that covers all of our pastors with basic health insurance." Added are "Special instructions: The role of the Executive Board will be to oversee a collaborative process including area conferences, churchwide agencies and related institutions and local congregations. This process is expected to result in a plan design and funding mechanism that will be owned by all parts of the church."

As in past assemblies, delegates will meet in table groups to discuss this and other resolutions and statements.

Other business: July 3, the first full day of the Delegate Assembly, will include a Bible study on the statement Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love, adopted in 1995 alongside the Vision: Healing and Hope statement and the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.

Another resolution coming to delegates is to join Christian Churches Together (see April 3, page 23). Delegates will also hear a report on the church member profile, the Executive Board's six-year review and a presentation on our lifestyle and related issues of sustainability from a Mennonite perspective. This is a carry-over request from the Charlotte Assembly.

On July 5, following a churchwide financial report, delegates will discuss how to regard the place of congregational discernment amid other forms of discernment in conferences and denominational statements.

Later that day are scheduled discussions with youth, antiracism and new global relationships with Congolese Mennonites.

Youth: The largest group at Mennonite conventions includes those taking part in the Youth Convention. As at previous conventions, youth will participate in worship, their own track of seminars and service projects. Speakers include Michele Hershberger, John D. Roth, Rudy Carrasco, Jason Evans, Paul Alexander at joint worship session July 4 (see page 14), Jim Brenneman, Brenda Matthews and Luke Hartman.

Young adults: For San José 2007, Jess Roth of Nebraska, Bess Moser of Ohio and Rachel Swartzendruber, associate director of convention planning, are coordinating the young adult activities. The priority for the young adult activities in San José is to create a space for young adults to connect on a regular basis. Each night at 9:30 there will be music, discussion, concerts, humor or some other activity planned for young adults ages 18 to 30.

Conventions will also be held for junior high and children.

Read on for more information to help you be ready when you come to California for San José 2007.

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

Preconvention events

by Anna Groff

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Matthew Lester / MCC

Voices from the Valley

La voz del valle

Leaders of Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference (PSMC), in collaboration with West Coast Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), will offer a day of reflection on key issues surrounding realities of immigration and the border. Participants will depart from the convention center July 2 and travel to the Fresno/Reedley, Calif., area.

"This arose out of the document that deals with immigration … and out of a critical need in our area," says Al Whaley, pastor of First Mennonite Church, Phoenix, Ariz., and a PSMC conference minister.

Immigration is a pressing concern for many in PSMC. More than 80 percent of people in the churches have immigration issues with Mexico, Canada and Indonesia. "It's labeled as an issue with Mexico, but it's broader than that," Whaley says.

The tour is similar to a trip Whaley took with Borderlinks, a faith-based organization that seeks to build relationships between North and Latin Americans.

Whaley says the border is created by people. "We know there are legalities involved; we don't shy away from that," he says. However, the scriptural idea of "welcoming the stranger" is vital for church work, he says.

During the tour to Fresno/Reedley, people will meet with undocumented people and hear their stories. They will also meet with owners of the fields where many of these undocumented people work. Whaley says there is value in hearing these two perspectives from different groups of people who are dependent on each other.

PSMC is organizing the trip with help from MCC. Registration for the tour is $85 per person and is limited to 25 participants.

Sing the Story

Introducing the New Hymnal Supplement

Sing the Story, the new hymnal supplement, will be introduced at a workshop July 2, before the convention.

Led by members of the Hymnal Supplement Committee (including Marlene Kropf, Ken Nafziger and Randall Spaulding), this workshop will include worship and an opportunity to learn many of the songs in the supplement.

Sing the Story is the second of a pair of supplements that offer music and worship resources to the church for use and testing prior to the possible development of a new hymnal. The first in the pair, *Sing the Journey*, was introduced at Charlotte 2005.

Kropf says they had a wonderful response to the introduction workshop for *Sing the Journey*, so the committee decided to offer a similar day for *Sing the Story*. "People said it was just so wonderful to start convention experience with singing all day," she says.

Sing the Story tells the story of Jesus and is geared from Advent to Pentecost, Kropf says, although it can be used year-round. The committee often refers to *Sing the Story* as the "Jesus book."

Sing the Story
HYMNAL A WORSHIP BOOK SUPPLEMENT II

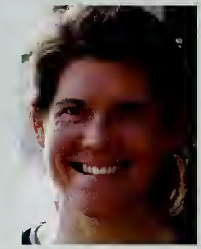
"We will be singing the story of Jesus that day," Kropf says of the workshop.

Registration for the all-day workshop is $60. The fee includes a morning refreshment break as well as a copy of the new hymnal supplement.

Speakers for adult worship sessions

Juan Martínez
"Called into God's Story," Ephesians 1:1-2:10
Monday, July 2
Juan Martínez is assistant dean for the Hispanic church studies department and associate professor of Hispanic studies and pastoral leadership at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. He is an ordained Mennonite Brethren pastor.

Mary Thiessen Nation
"Called to Reconciliation," Ephesians 2:16-22
Tuesday, July 3
Mary Thiessen Nation spent 18 years in ministry in a violent Los Angeles neighborhood. She is passionate about training ministers and missionaries for holistic responses to crises and conflict. Thiessen Nation is a lecturer, spiritual mentor and consultant in urban mission, as well as adjunct professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.



Jennifer Davis Sensenig
"Called to Claim God's Power," Ephesians 6:10-
Wednesday, July 4
Jennifer Davis Sensenig
a member of the pastor
staff of Pasadena (Calif.
Mennonite Church. Her
ministry outside the local congregation
includes teaching in the Center for Anabapti
Leadership's School for Urban Mission, writi
"Clothe Yourself in Love" for Mennonite Wom
and sponsoring Anabaptist perspectives and
education at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Registrants (as of May 7)

Adults	1,624
Youth and sponsors	3,876
Junior high and sponsors	166
Children	100
Preschool	21
Infants/toddlers	35
Total	**5,822**

Conventio

Displaced: Lydia and Mac Lodrigue (far right) and five children who will live in the home being built by MDS volunteers. The children's ages are 11, 14, 15, 16 and 17.

House-building

Mennonite Disaster Service project

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) plans to assemble a hurricane-resistant panel house for a family in Houma, La., at San José 2007. Construction will take place on a parking lot at the San José Convention Center.

Convention participants may volunteer to build the panels for the house, which will then be disassembled and shipped to Louisiana for quick assembly by MDS volunteers in Houma. At that point electricity and plumbing will be added. The foundation for the house is ready.

Scott Sundberg, director of communications for MDS, says this project fits with MDS's goal to find ways for people to participate in house-building without traveling to the Gulf Coast.

This project is in addition to the servant projects offered at convention. Youth and adults can sign up for 2.5-hour blocks of time.

Like most of the houses MDS has built in Houma, this house will be elevated and placed atop reinforced concrete blocks several feet off the ground to prevent damage from floods and storms.

The recipients of the house are Mac and Lydia Lodrigue and five of their 12 children, who now live in two FEMA trailers in Houma, La. The Lodrigues were displaced from their home by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The Lodrigues connected with MDS through the Louisiana Coastal Tribal Coalition, a long-term recovery committee in southern Louisiana.

Scott Hartman, office manager for convention planning, says perhaps some community people will join the construction, and maybe the local media in San José will pick up on the project.

Learning Tracks

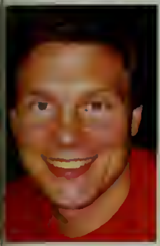
Geared to roles, not topics

Learning Tracks will provide an opportunity for equipping pastors, other congregational leaders and conference leaders through several sessions at convention.

The sessions are intended for people who have leadership responsibilities in specific roles (e.g. education, stewardship, ministerial credentialing), or provide leadership in specific contexts (e.g. pastors and congregational leaders in rural and urban settings, bivocational pastors) or who have a common leadership task (e.g. missional change, transition pastors).

Learning Tracks function differently from seminars, which attract people because of a topic or issue, instead of one's role in the church.

Keith Harder, director of Congregational and



Paul Alexander
"Citizens of God's Kingdom"
Wednesday evening, July 4 Joint worship session
Paul Alexander (see page 14) is a fourth-generation Pentecostal (Assemblies of God). While at a doctoral program at Baylor niversity in Waco, Texas, he discovered the onscientious objection to war and concern r social justice in his own denomination's istory, which inspired him to write *Spirit mpowered Peacemaking: Toward a Pentecostal harismatic Peace Fellowship.*

Shane Hipps
"Called to Transformation—Living in Love," Ephesians 5:1-2; Ephesians 5:8-14
Thursday, July 5
Shane Hipps is lead pastor of Trinity Mennonite Church, an urban congregation in Phoenix. Before earning a master of divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary, he had a career in advertising as a strategic planner. He also wrote *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church.*

Pastor Pam Chuwang
"Called to One Hope as One Body," Ephesians 4:1-16
Friday evening, July 6
Pastor Pam Chuwang was born in Nigeria and moved to Los Angeles in 1977 to study film and television. He is pastor of Los Angeles Faith Chapel, which began working with homeless members of the downtown Los Angeles skid rows by providing shelter. Today the church feeds the homeless hot meals, gives away clothing and food.

events

by Anna Groff

Ministerial Leadership for Mennonite Church USA, says he hopes Learning Tracks will provide an opportunity to build an identity and network, as well as provide input relating to common perspectives that reflect a churchwide position.

"For example, there's one for members of conference credentialing committees," Harder says. "We think it's in everyone's good interest to be on the same page in our understanding of credentialing and ordination, and the processes."

People can talk together, take home their findings and improve their processes in their congregations or conferences, he adds.

There will be three times for Learning Tracks during the convention, with different tracks meeting for one, two or three sessions.

Peace witness for immigration issues

July 4

A peace witness on July 4 is a recurring theme at conventions. This year's will address immigration issues and include worship, education and a public witness, which planners continue finalizing, says Susan Mark Landis, peace advocate for Mennonite Church USA.

Through this event, intended for all ages, the broader church can be made aware of the immigration issues that face many congregations, says Mark Landis.

This peace witness is one of several events focused on immigration. For example, the Pacific Southwest Conference will offer a Bible study on immigration, and there will be a showing of *Fuerza*, a documentary by Goshen (Ind.) College students about the effects of immigration on two small cities: Goshen and Apan, Hidalgo, Mexico.

Postconvention event

by Anna Groff

Leadership and anxiety in the church

July 7

Leadership and Anxiety in the Church, an all-day workshop offered after the convention, will take a biblical look at the challenge presented by the rising levels of anxiety in churches today, as well as leadership's role in calming such anxiety, so that the church can stay focused on its purpose.

Susan Mark Landis, peace advocate for Mennonite Church USA, says there is high anxiety in churches for many reasons. "We're living in an anxious country, which is reflected in congregational life."

"Good leadership can get us through that and make us strong. Anxious leadership can destroy us," she says.

Richard Blackburn, executive director for the Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Peace Center, will facilitate the workshop. Blackburn, who studied art history, uses a slide presentation with art to accompany his presentation.

Mark Landis says she encourages congregational teams to attend and bring lay leaders. She hopes teams who are in transition, teams who perceive tensions to be low and teams who know they have problems will participate.

After paying two full registrations, congregations may send additional people at a cost of $37 each. The cost of $62/person includes an extensive manual.

Pentecostal pacifist to speak for joi

Focus on

Paul Alexander (right) of Azusa, Calif., and speaker for the July 4 evening worship at the Mennonite Church USA San José Convention, with his wife, Deborah, daughter Kharese (top) and son Nathan.

Paul Alexander found a peace theology in a place he never thought to look—buried beneath the teachings of his own denomination. Raised in a Pentecostal family with a devout love of Jesus and in a church wedded to civil religion, Alexander at age 25 thought he knew Jesus.

Then he discovered peace, and his search for Jesus started all over again.

Today Alexander sits in his office at Azusa (Calif.) Pacific University, amazed at his faith journey—one that took him from his parents' home in Sedan, Kan., to college and graduate school in Texas, and now to southern California, where he directs the doctor of ministry program at Azusa.

Mennonite Church USA convention planners have asked Alexander to speak to youth and adults during the July 4 evening worship at San José. The message from this peace-loving Pentecostal will be simple: Don't lose focus on Jesus.

Background: "My great-grandparents were part of the Pentecostal movement at the beginning of the 20th century, when it was just getting started. For Mennonites that's not a long heritage, but for Pentecostals, that's as far back as it goes," Alexander explains. Traditional beginnings for the movement date back to revivals in 1901 in Topeka, Kan., and in 1906 in Los Angeles.

Pentecostals believe in a baptism of the Holy Spirit evidenced by divine healings and speaking in tongues. Pentecostals in the United States today, including evangelists Oral Roberts and Rex Humbard, number more than 20 million.

The largest Pentecostal denomination is Assemblies of God, the church to which Alexander's parents belong and in which Paul Alexander is a minister.

"My dad prayed for me and my brother almost every night of our growing-up years. He would plead the blood of Jesus over us. I was used to an emotional religion of weeping and praying. Dad's great advice to me was to always, 'Seek Jesus,'" Alexander says.

Raised with a heart for the church, missions and world, Alexander claims that his denomination was in love with the military and patriotism and also wedded to civil religion.

"My love of Jesus and my heart for God and the church went well with my love and patriotism for this country. The thought of being a conscientious objector—or opposing war or not killing someone in self-defense or for America—seemed ludicrous to me," Alexander says. "I could not fathom the idea of a Christian not killing. The Amish and Mennonites seemed rather silly and naïve."

Alexander completed his bachelor's degree in cross-cultural missions in three years at

worship at San José Mennonite convention

Jesus

by June Krehbiel

Southwestern Assemblies of God University in Waxahachie, Texas. Two years later he earned his master of divinity degree.

During his doctoral work in theology at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, he struggled with his faith. Where is the all-loving and all-powerful God, he wondered, when there is suffering and evil in the world? Where is this God we plead to for healing when healing doesn't happen? Where is the Jesus I thought I understood so well?

Reclaiming his peace heritage: Doing research for a course, Alexander remembers that he "accidentally" learned about the peace heritage and social justice concerns that had been part of the early history of the Assemblies of God church until the Vietnam War.

Shocked and surprised, this one-time disciple of Far Right political commentators absorbed the writings of the United Methodist theologian Stanley Hauerwas and took a course taught by Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder—in 1997, months before Yoder died.

After learning about peace and ethics, after "finding" the Jesus described by Yoder and the Peace Church tradition and after discovering the early Pentecostal conscientious objectors, Alexander reclaimed his faith.

"The theology of peacemaking was very persuasive. I realized that Jesus saved me. I came to understand that if Jesus is the Son of God and the Way, then this is what it means to live that way," Alexander says.

He had found a strong, passionate vocal and public witness for nonviolence and forgiveness and against war and nationalism. Only after first learning stories of the Assemblies of God pacifists did he discover that his grandfather had resisted conscription during World War II.

Grandpa in CPS: "When Grandpa Smith was drafted, he wrote a letter to General Hershey and to the President, explaining that he was a Pentecostal Christian, a follower of Jesus, and he could not kill," Alexander says. Granted an exemption, W.B. Smith of Mt. Pleasant, Texas, served in a Civilian Public Service camp in Virginia from April 1942 to February 1945.

A conscientious objector's grandson, Alexander could no longer argue for violence in any form. "Earlier I thought I had all the answers and I could explain war and justify violence—that sometimes you just have to kill people—but I was wrong."

The position came directly from his Pentecostal heritage. Sound theological and biblical arguments, including those from Mennonites, backed up the peace position. Alexander finally told himself, "OK, I'm going to follow Jesus."

Owning peace: Although Alexander's years of owning the peace position have held some rocky days, he continues to follow "God's call to the way of Christ in all things." Discipleship is ongoing.

Earlier I thought I had all the answers and I could explain war and justify violence—that sometimes you just have to kill people—but I was wrong.
—Paul Alexander

In July 2001, Alexander founded the Pentecostal Charismatic Peace Fellowship, which now has around 500 members. As its executive director, he has met twice since the Charlotte (N.C.) Convention with Mennonite Church USA leaders, including peace advocate Susan Mark Landis and director of interchurch relations André Gingerich Stoner, to discuss how denominational peace fellowships can work together.

In 2005, Alexander put his walk with peace into action when he joined a Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation to Palestine/Israel/West Bank.

"My father always told me to seek Jesus. Little did he or I know that this would lead me to take peacemaking so seriously," Alexander says.

June Krehbiel writes for Mennonite Church USA News Service.

Mennonite youth conventions are times to prai

The youth of the church

by Jacob Yordy

The youth of the church are persevering in a world where each generation wanders farther from God.

They are persevering in a society in which teens are dismissed as big children or temperamental and immature investments in the future.

They are persevering in a time when God is easier than ever to dismiss as human ingenuity or science, a time when sex is often seen as a casual interaction, a time when ritualistic religion replaces spiritual connections.

I am a Christian. I believe God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to die for my sins. I believe it is incredibly wrong to sin. And I believe that few people in the world today truly understand God's will.

I live in the United States, the capitalist authority. Almost everyone believes in God or says they believe in some form of God. Yet I am just beginning to realize that this country's actions often fail to reflect the will of the Lord.

I am part of the next generation, one molded by war video games and used to rampant consumerism. I watch as people I know decide they want nothing less than to serve in the war overseas. Army representatives come to my high school toting bags of impressive trinkets and promising young men they will be honored and remembered. Amid this pressure to be a citizen who puts his or her country first, members of my Mennonite church and other churches from all over the country put God first instead.

Every day I deal with statements from my peers and even friends that directly contradict what exemplifies a God-centered individual's thoughts. I am faced with hundreds of decisions each day, and I cannot imagine how I could get through them without God.

Some people my age have left God in the dust. They have openly denied the existence of the Lord. These are people I see stumble and fail while trying to lead a purposeful and determined life. Part of being a Mennonite, or any Christian for that matter, means I don't have to face those difficult decisions on my own; I have God by my side in all I do and am constantly influenced by his will.

Many adults say teens are rebellious. By nature, some are. Many adults say teens are not close to adults. In aspects such as maturity and responsibility, there are times when we can't measure up. But when it comes to spirituality, teens are raring to go. We are young adults who can't wait to continue our journey with God.

It may seem we don't pay attention through the entire sermon and church services. I know I don't. Some Mennonite churches (such as mine) are too small for multiple pastors. Most sermons are written for mature interests. These sermons include adult issues and concepts foreign to teens. The songs and responses represent the wants and needs of our parents. The closest teens are able to get to God is during the Mennonite conventions, when sermons are geared to teens and we are able to give our entire attention to the message.

It is no coincidence that some of the best times of my life are the conventions; they are times when I can feel myself taking the path Jesus took and I can feel him walking with me. Conventions are times when many Mennonite youth, all of them facing the same pressures and striving to keep God first in their lives, can congregate and praise the Lord together. It is much easier, and from my experiences more meaningful, to praise God in the security and joy of having others who believe the same things as you at your side.

That is why I am looking forward to San José 2007 with such anticipation. That is why I simply can't wait for this Mennonite convention; it will be an affirmation of my faith and a confirmation that the youth of the church are persevering.

Jacob Yordy, 16, is a member of North Suburban Mennonite Church, Libertyville, Ill.

he Lord together as peers.

Kevin Miller / Bethany Christian Schools

Jordan Kauffman / Bethany Christian Schools

Live the call! ¡Vive el llamado!

Everett Thomas

Women of color encounter the face of God

Iris de León-Hartshorn is director of Intercultural Relations for Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership.

God is moving in ways that may catch us by surprise. Women of color throughout the Mennonite world—both in the United States and abroad—are embracing opportunities God is setting before us. Be ready to listen, hear and see what God is doing.

In 2003, at the Mennonite World Conference gathering in Zimbabwe, two Latin American women, Alix Lozano from Colombia and Ofelia Garcia from Mexico, met with African women leaders Mama Kadi Beatrice, Mama Sidonie Swana and Esther Kalambo. They met to dream together how they could continue widening the dialogue on how women of color experience God and how that has shaped their theology. Alix and Ofelia were inspired to start working toward a gathering of Latinas throughout the Americas at the MWC gathering in Paraguay in 2009. They spread the word and encouraged Latinas to have regional gatherings in preparation for that gathering.

Elizabeth Soto (Puerto Rican) and I (Mexican descent) were excited by the call and thought about what it might mean for Latinas in the United States and Canada. What stories could we share with each other to help us understand how our own theological understandings were shaped by our cultural, socioeconomic and gender lenses? What could we contribute to the wider church to help it understand our Anabaptist theology more fully? Where is God's Spirit leading us in this wonderful venture?

What if engaging in regional and global theological discussions with women at the grass roots, as started by women in Congo, is the beginning of a rebirth of our Anabaptist faith?

In 2005, a small group of Latinas and African-American Anabaptist women met and enjoyed a rich encounter with Scripture. Wilma Bailey led us. We worshiped together and were able to see the ways many of our individual experiences intersected.

This fall we will engage a broader discussion, including women of African descent, Native women and Latinas from the United States and Canada. I look forward to the communion of these women in God's presence. I wonder what God has in store for us, what gifts we will bring to enrich our communion together.

As women of color, we will explore our struggles, victories and vision for a church that honors all voices. First-generation immigrant women will find a safe space to speak of the hardships they encounter. Other women will recount their encounters of racism and sexism, and still others will report their work for the sake of shalom, seeking justice for their communities and others who face injustices. I anticipate encountering the face of God as each woman contributes to the dialogue.

The meeting of these women from the United States and Canada will not be limited to our gathering in October. My hope is that we will be able to engage the wider church in further dialogue as we give voice to our understanding of God through our lenses. My dream is to deepen our collective self-understanding as Anabaptists and contribute to the larger church.

What if engaging in regional and global theological discussions with women at the grass roots, as started by women in Congo, is the beginning of a rebirth of our Anabaptist faith? What if the meeting of the African and Latina women is the 21st-century meeting of Felix Manz, George Blaurock and Conrad Grebel, where the first rebaptism took place? Significant movements have been known to take place in unlikely places, so why can't one start with women of color? Are you ready to listen, hear and see what God is about to do in our midst? I know I am. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Three Journeys: Jesus-Constantine-Muhammad**—David W. Shenk
- **My brother Bashu**—John C. Murray
- **Network supports asylum seekers**—Anna Groff

Entire congregation can Gather 'Round

New curriculum lets children, youth and adults study the same Bible texts.

St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church attempted to coordinate the biblical text in Sunday school and worship for all ages in past years. But they only found success with Gather 'Round, a new Christian education curriculum jointly produced by Mennonite Publishing Network and Brethren Press.

Barb Smith-Morrison, a pastor at St. Jacobs, says Gather 'Round provided the tools to bring consistency between Sunday school and worship.

Now St. Jacobs opens its Sunday school hour with children—and sometimes adults—gathered to experience the Bible story together. With Gather 'Round, all ages study the same text and learn the memory verse's sign language.

"It's been a very moving, powerful experience to see everyone signing together," says Lisa Carr-Pries, another pastor at St. Jacob's and a Gather 'Round trainer.

The children's time and sermon is also based on the Gather 'Round text. Repeating the story adds layers and creativity, says Mark Diller Harder, a third member of the pastoral team. With the familiarity of the text, sermons get at a deeper level, he says.

All the adults also study the Gather 'Round material in their Sunday school class.

Not only Mennonite churches use Gather 'Round. Anna Speicher, managing editor of Gather 'Round, says she has received calls, for example, from an Episcopal congregation in Indiana and a Baptist congregation in Texas interested in Gather 'Round for their churches.

Gather 'Round evolved from the Jubilee curriculum that ran for 12 years and "stands on the shoulders of Jubilee." Speicher describes the new curriculum as a "thinking curriculum," since it asks children to reflect and views teachers as "co-learners," similar to Jubilee.

Jennifer Ulrich, Sunday school superintendent at Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., says one teacher reported that the lessons are easy for the children to understand, and the repetition is age-appropriate. However, teachers for the older children's classes say they have experienced some difficulty with the lessons, such as discussing abstract ideas, such as the upside-down kingdom.

Unlike Jubilee, which was on a three-year cycle, Gather 'Round is ever-changing; each year new lessons are written.

"We can continue to make the curriculum evolve," Speicher says, "changing with the world and keeping it fresh."

Gather 'Round also offers a new feature for each quarter called a "Talkabout," an interactive product for families that relates to the lessons. "Talkabouts" are daily tear-off calendars, refrigerator magnet puzzles and parable playing deck cards.

Eleanor Snyder, director of Faith and Life Resources, says that "Talkabout" receives mixed reviews. It needs more education about it, she says, since it is one of the curriculum's "cutting edges" used to make the "home connection."

Snyder says the "Jubilee diehard users for 12 years" are adjusting to the new curriculum, and those who were tired of Jubilee see Gather 'Round's newness as exciting.—*Anna Groff*

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In 1957, just three years after an uneasy truce sliced North and South Vietnam apart in an effort to "contain" communism in the north, James and Arlene Stauffer entered South Vietnam as the first Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) workers there.

James Stauffer reminisced about those early days in Vietnam during a celebration of 50 years of Mennonite mission work in Vietnam at the March 30 meeting of the EMM board in Salunga, Pa.

As the first EMM personnel in the country, the Stauffers began language school and scouted out locations for ministry. They visited all the provincial capitals of South Vietnam as well as Mennonite Central Committee's work locations. MCC had entered the country three years earlier to provide relief assistance after the French Indochina War.

As the Stauffers got oriented to Vietnam and welcomed co-workers Everett and Margaret Metzler several months later, the EMM team fellowshiped with the Tin Lanh ("Good News") Church, the primary evangelical church in the country, one that had grown from the ministry of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

The EMM team also started weekly English classes and evangelistic services but did not immediately set out to plant Mennonite churches. There was something attractive about having only one evangelical denomination in the country. Then two years later, when EMM administrators met with Tin Lanh leaders, they encouraged the Mennonites to start their own churches. "They only asked that we don't bring in false doctrines and don't steal their sheep," Stauffer said.

While the Mennonite peace position made the EMM team a bit suspect among some Tin Lanh leaders and CMA missionaries, other Vietnamese found it a welcome teaching in the midst of an unpopular war.—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

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April 16 shootings impact South Koreans

Korean Anabaptist Center deals with students distressed, shamed by murders.

The impact of the April 16 shootings on the Virginia Tech University campus that left 33 people dead has stretched across the Pacific. In South Korea, representatives from Korea Anabaptist Center (KAC) have been dealing with the concern and shame in their students, as well as assumptions about what the incident reflects of American culture, how it influenced Seung-Hui Cho and what it might mean to future relations.

KAC staff members responded when news of the shooting reached Seoul, gathering to pray for the victims, family and friends as well as others involved. Kyong-Jung Kim, KAC acting director, says he, like many Koreans, was extremely distressed by the news from Virginia.

Korean culture, language and mentality, he says, reflects a communal, family-centered society that emphasizes the "we" over the "I." When an individual acts, those actions reflect on the entire community—in this case, an entire country.

Kim, noting press reports that Cho may have been mentally disturbed, says that analysis does not seem fair. There must, he said, be a cause for Cho's actions. Where, Kim wonders, was the church community—any church community—in Cho's life? What does this tragedy teach us about the church's calling to reach out to those that society considers outsiders?

"I come across the passages, 'Love your neighbors as yourself,' and, 'Treat others as you would like to be treated,'" Kim says, suggesting that a church perhaps could have done more to reach out to Cho and others like him. "What made him so separated from the groups that he was to belong to?"

In Seoul, KAC's mandate is to promote Anabaptist perspectives, theology and action in a culture with significant Christian presence but few Anabaptists. They do this through interaction with other Christian organizations and leaders and through personal interaction with students—often younger people—seeking to learn English.

Stephanie and Stephen Major, teachers placed in KAC's English-language training institute through Mennonite Mission Network, are from Nazareth, Pa., and Jonestown, Pa., respectively. Their students have tried to communicate feelings of shame, sorrow and shock.

"South Koreans view Korean-Americans as still essentially Korean because of blood," the Majors say. "They feel collectively tied to this action by one of their countrymen."

Jodi and Joe Stutzman, also at the institute through Mission Network, say that many of their South Korean students seem to believe that most people in the United States carry guns. Some students wondered what U.S. residents would now think of the average Korean.—*Ryan Miller for Mennonite Mission Network*

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In 2007 the MCC budget is $44 million USD, with more than 700 staff in more than 50 countries.

Meserete Kristos College moves in

Courtesy photo

Meserete Kristos College, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, moved into its new and partially completed education building in January. Founded 13 years ago, the college now serves 110 full-time and 42 part-time students.

Founded as a fledgling Bible Institute in 1994, the Meserete Kristos College grew in rented quarters in Kotebe, Addis Ababa, to become a degree granting theological college with 110 full-time and 42 part-time students last fall. Then in January, the school took the giant step of picking up all its physical assets and moving "lock, stock and barrel" to its new permanent home on the outskirts of Debre Zeit, a town of about 100,000 that is 45 kilometers southeast. All 30-plus truckloads of stuff was squeezed into the first half of the new education building (above). Students followed on Feb. 5. Classes began the next day.

When the second half is added, the education building will be a five-story structure of 91 rooms with a total usable floor space of 54,600 square feet—enough to house all the classrooms, academic offices, library, and language and computer labs. It will be the first of 11 buildings projected for a campus designed for 2,000 students. The cost of this first building will be about $1.7 million.

For now, this half building is a spacious home for the whole college, with the men's dorm on the top floor and the women's on the floor below. Food preparation is done outside in two tin shacks, and the cafeteria is God's great outdoors. A kitchen, dining hall and toilet block are under construction.

This not-quite-finished building stands tall as a monument to the cooperation between the Ethiopian church and international partners who shared their resources over the past eight years. The first of the liberal arts programs will be inaugurated in this new facility in September.—*Carl E. Hansen of Meserete Kristos College*

Churches from Spain, Paraguay in Africa

Cristina López from Paraguay is helping care for children in a home begun in Benin several years ago by a Mennonite church in Burgos, Spain. How did it happen that church communities thousands of miles apart collaborated on an international mission in Africa?

"About 1996, our church community was going through difficulties," says pastor Agustín Melgizo Alda of Burgos, Spain, "which led us to feel that God was calling us to a change of focus. Instead of centering on our problems, we began to look into needs outside our country and to consider whether there was something we could do about them."

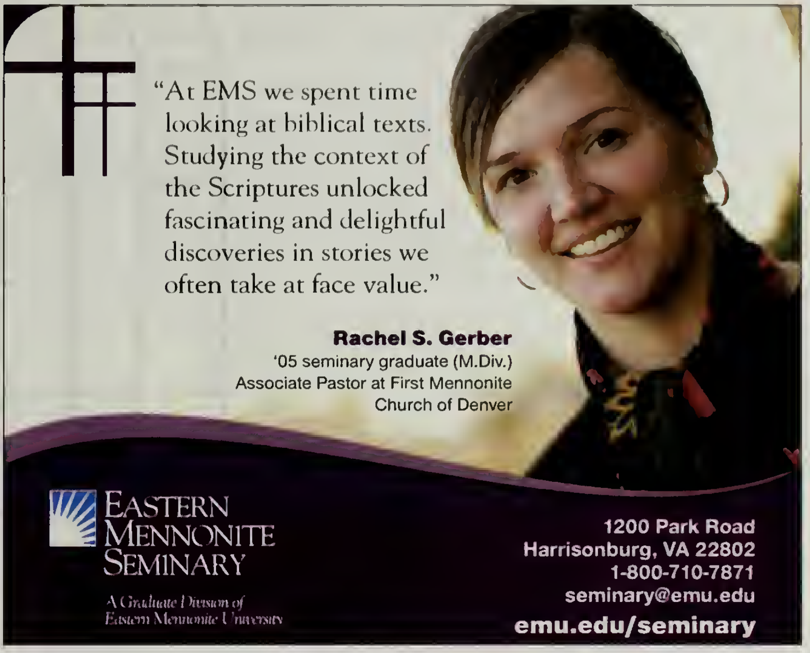
In 1997, a delegation from Spain attended the Mennonite World Conference in Calcutta. In 1998, another group visited Benin and the Ivory Coast, invited by Mennonite Mission Network. These experiences deepened what they already sensed: the conviction that Benin was where they could start helping others who were already working there and later begin their own activity.

Francisco and Annette Castillo, who had experience as mission workers in Africa, were ready to cooperate, so in the summer of 2000, the Spanish church rented a house in Cotonou, Benin, and opened a shelter for displaced children. This house soon became too small. Today, La Casa Grande, a new home in Allada, houses 25 children. Francisco and Annette have returned to Spain, leaving a consolidated team of Africans in charge.

The Burgos Mennonite community has had a long relationship with Mennonite Mission Network, which from the beginning supported the work of La Casa Grande in Benin. It was through Mission Network that the church came to know of Cristina López, a young woman from the Mennonite Church in Paraguay, which offered to collaborate on the project for one year.

Recently, Alvin Neufeld, president of the Convención Evangélica Menonita del Paraguay (Evangelical Mennonite Conference of Paraguay), says that more than one year ago they started preparing Cristina López to go to Africa as a missionary.

"Amazingly the doors opened to get in touch with the Mennonite church in Burgos, Spain," says Neufeld, "and through them to get involved with La Casa Grande orphanage in Benin. YAMEN, a joint Mennonite World Conference and Mennonite Central Committee program for young adults, made it possible to send Cristina to serve in Benin for one year."—*Milka Rindzinski, assisted by Agustín Melgizo Alda and Alvin Neufeld, for Mennonite World Conference*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Bluffton University creates memorial

Major League Baseball contributes $50,000 to remember baseball players.

Bluffton (Ohio) University president James M. Harder announced plans for a lasting memorial to the 2007 baseball team prior to the team's final home game versus Defiance (Ohio) College on May 1.

"Today, Bluffton University is pleased to announce plans to move forward with the creation of a lasting memorial to the 2007 men's baseball team and the five players who lost their lives as a result of the bus accident in Atlanta," said Harder to the baseball team, families, faculty, staff, community members and members of the media. "Our goal is to create a remembrance through which current and future members of Bluffton's extended community and others will be able to embrace this indelible chapter of Bluffton's history."

With funds from across the nation, the university will make enhancements to the team's current diamond, including new and enlarged dugouts and additional site development and landscaping.

On May 1, the field was renamed "Bluffton University Memorial Field." It will eventually include a permanent commemorative memorial that honors the 2007 team and the players who lost their lives. The enhancements are to be in place by the start of the 2008 baseball season.

In announcing the memorial, Harder recognized $10,000 gifts by the Bluffton University Student Senate and Tiffin University, who coordinated a "Purple Day" fund-raiser spearheaded by senior softball player Lee Zajak.

Harder also recognized Major League Baseball for its $50,000 gift. Joe Garagiola Jr., vice president of baseball operations for Major League Baseball, was on hand for the announcement.

Garagiola, son of former catcher and legendary broadcaster Joe Garagiola, said Major League Baseball is always interested in reaching out and helping individuals and causes when they need it the most.

"Giving to Bluffton was an easy decision to make, and we are so pleased to be a part of this," Garagiola said. "The team could have quit but didn't, and for years to come, when kids play on this field, they will know people of character were on the field before them."

With the addition of these gifts, the memorial fund has surpassed $110,000. More than 175 individuals, 15 colleges and universities and numerous other schools, groups, organizations and companies have contributed to the fund.

If gifts to the memorial fund exceed project costs, the university will apply the additional funds to the future construction of a facility that will benefit all Bluffton students: a new health and fitness education center. The center is already part of the university's strategic plan. For more information visit www.bluffton.edu/giving/baseball07.—*Jill A. Duling of Bluffton University*

Systems Developer

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) has an opening for a systems developer to design, develop, and implement information systems in an IBM iSeries Plex, RPG, Web, and PC LAN environment. Qualified applicants will have a bachelor's degree or equivalent experience in applied or analytical science; experience with/ability to learn programming languages, systems analysis, design, and project management; strong interpersonal and communication skills.

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CALENDAR

Puerto Rico Reunion in **Archbold, Ohio**, July 21 and 22 for all who have served in Puerto Rico and others. For a registration form, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Juan and Odette Rolon, 107 Park St., Archbold, Ohio, or send a message to chpn@metalink.net.

NIH normal control patients reunion, Sept. 8. For more information contact Jim Conrad at nihcontrol@yahoo.com or 215-257-7872.

WORKERS

Forrey, Eugene K., was installed as interim pastor at Lost Creek Mennonite Church, Mifflintown, Pa., effective March 15.

Lapp, Dan L., ordained minister at Friendship Mennonite Church, Penns Grove, N.J., left Lancaster Conference effective Oct. 1, 2006. His credential is discontinued.

Miller, Daniel L., was licensed toward ordination as youth pastor at New Life Mennonite Church, Washington-Baltimore, effective March 25.

Miller, Doyle, was licensed as a pastoral elder at Wasepi Mennonite Chapel, Centreville, Mich., on March 25.

Miller, Ed, was licensed for specific ministry as an elder at Wasepi Mennonite Chapel, Centreville, Mich., on March 25.

Miller, Randy, was licensed as a pastoral elder at Wasepi Mennonite Chapel, Centreville, Mich., on March 25.

Myers, John M., was ordained as associate pastor at Elizabethtown Mennonite Church, Elizabethtown, Pa., effective Jan. 21.

Nimon, James R., resigned as associate pastor at Living Stones Fellowship, Peach Bottom, Pa., effective Feb. 4.

Raber, Chris, was licensed as youth pastor at Providence Mennonite Church, Montgomery, Ind., on March 25.

Schrag, Rhoda, ended a term as pastor of Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart, Ind., on April 15.

Wenger, James L., resigned as lead pastor at Friendship Mennonite Church, Penns Grove, N.J., effective July 1.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Archer, Owen Allen, March 29, to Victor and Jennifer Shank Archer, Kalona, Iowa.

Beachy, Lydia Salome, April 17, to Jon and Anita Miller Beachy, Coralville, Iowa.

Blackburn, Charlotte Perri, April 11, to Mike and Jane Musser Blackburn, Port Republic, Va.

Blum, Peyton Cole, April 13, to Timothy and Susan Nice Blum, Telford, Pa.

Bowman, Gabriel Andrew, April 9, Josh Croston and Renea Bowman, Moses Lake, Wash.

Coblentz, Makana Ann, March 23, to Seth and Lindsay Burkholder Coblentz, Uniontown, Ohio.

Dean, Ivan Ezra, April 16, to Benjamin and Susan Beigler Dean, Quakertown, Pa.

Diller, Hunter Daniel, April 3, to Phil and Kristie Pankratz Diller, Newton, Kan.

Friesen, Leah Grace, March 7, to Doug and Tina Groff Friesen, Brownstown, Pa.

Graber, Reid Nolan, April 14, to Nathan and Shelby Fast Graber, Newton, Kan.

Hawkins, Silas Aaron, April 2, to Tim and Jana Schulz Hawkins, Anchorage, Alaska.

Isgrig, Isaiah Edward, March 23, to Dwayne and Emily Davis Isgrig, St. Louis, Mo.

Keim, Cade William, March 19, to Robbie and Karen Groff Keim, Charm, Ohio.

Keller, Tyler Shane, April 23, to Shane and Amy Alwine Keller, Tylersport, Pa.

Kolb, Wesley Aaron, April 11, to Marcus and Carol Snyder Kolb, Phoenixville, Pa.

Landis, Katelyn Noel, April 17, to Chad and Kari Moyer Landis, Pennsburg, Pa.

Levenda, Carson James, March 9, to Jim and Terri Christner Levenda, Phoenix, Ariz.

Mehl, Kevin Daniel, April 18, to Andy and LeAnn Yoder Mehl, Goshen, Ind.

Miller, Brody Austin, Feb. 3, to Dustin and Megan Popp Miller, Hutchinson, Kan.

Miller, Connor Patrick, March 28, to Roger and Shauna Glick Miller, Leola, Pa.

Rodriquez, Kaylee Mae, April 16, to Peter and Crystal Short Rodriquez, Archbold, Ohio.

Rush, Simeon Michael, April 22, to Jon and Marjorie Herr Rush, Lowville, N.Y.

"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

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Sneary, Jedrek Lewis, April 19, to Wayne and Shannon Sneary, Harrisonburg, Va.

Tschetter, Jazzlyn Jade, April 7, to Mark and Bonnie Goehring Tschetter, Freeman, S.D.

Zimmerman, Donovan Charles, April 22, to Donovan and Connie Kerr Zimmerman, Scottsdale, Ariz.

MARRIAGES

King/Trego: Ethan King, Newton, Kan., and Amy Trego, Newton, April 27 at Eberly Farms, Wichita, Kan.

Miller/Russell: Jesse Miller, Hartville, Ohio, and Lindsay Russell, Hartville, April 14 at Bethany Mennonite Church, Hartville.

Miller/Yoder: Michelle Miller, Kalona, Iowa, and Gentry Yoder, Parnell, Iowa, April 21 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell.

Ramer/Pirolli: Jay Ramer, Toledo, Ohio, and Natalie Pirolli, Toledo, April 13 at Toledo Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Amstutz, Aquila Arthur, 75, Dalton, Ohio, died Feb. 11 of a heart attack. Spouse: Ada Geiser Amstutz. Parents: Albert and Della Gerber Amstutz. Children: Eugene, Faye Hochstetler, Audrey Mast, Kris Steiner; 12 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 15 at Sonnenburg Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Bechtel, Arvilla Jane Shenk, 99, Souderton, Pa., died April 5. Spouse: Amos H. Bechtel (deceased). Parents: Elmer and Ina Swartz Shenk. Children: Marjorie L. Benner, Janet M. Ruth, Freda M. Trueb, Carol A. Ryan; nine grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren; seven great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 14 at Vincent Mennonite Church, Sprint City, Pa.

Beck, Orval J., 81, Goshen, Ind., died April 15. Spouse: Elizabeth Schrock Beck. Parents: Samuel and Amanda King Beck. Children: Gregory, Duane, Max, Kathleen Martin, Nedra Gnagey; 14 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 20 at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind.

Clemens, G. Earl, 95, Souderton, Pa., died April 6. Spouse: Eva H. Kulp Clemens (deceased). Parents: George A. and Susie B. Clemens. Children: Harold K., Clyde K.; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: April 14 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Eitzen, Ruth Carper, 82, Barto, Pa., died April 11, from complications related to treatment of a benign brain tumor. Spouse: Allan Eitzen. Parents: Reuben and Eva Weber Carper. Children: Hilda, Dirk, Ann, Laura, John; eight grandchildren. Memorial service: April 28 at Bally Mennonite Church, Bally, Pa.

Epp, Ruth Schmidt, 93, Newton, Kan., died April 14. Spouse: Paul F. Epp (deceased). Parents: Henry J. and Sara Schroeder Schmidt. Children: Verda Deckert, Weldon; five grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 18 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton.

Horst, Daniel H., 72, Harrisonburg, Va., died April 12. Spouse: Lucille Eby Horst. Parents: Otho and Anna Hoover Horst. Children: Douglas Lamar; two grandchildren. Funeral: April 28 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Horst, Esther M. Gehman, 82, Lititz, Pa., died April 9. Spouse: Willis W. Horst. Parents: Jacob and Rebecca Martin Gehman. Children: Donald, Jerry, Linda Martin; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: April 13 at Akron Mennonite Church, Akron, Pa.

Herald Press: Challenges and Rewards

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John L. Ruth

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Hostetler, Payson A., 93, Goshen, Ind., died April 18. Spouse: Hazel C. Kauffman Hostetler. Parents: Amos S. and Ida Yoder Hostetler. Children: Dennis, Roby Brower, Danny, Lila Fox, Lowell; seven grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 23 at Forks Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Koehn, Viola Unruh, 79, Canton, Kan., died March 28. Spouse: Victor F. Koehn. Children: Christine Nachtman, Becky Pyle, Ann Koehn, Darla Busenitz, Erlene Willhite; 18 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 31 at Inman Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Laib, Charity Yoder Wolfer, 93, Canby, Ore., died April 6. Spouse: Albert Laib (deceased). Ronald L. Wolfer (deceased). Parents: Edward Z. and Alice Troyer Yoder. Children: Edward. C. Wolfer, Merle E. Wolfer, Jane C. Rakonczay, Jimmie L. Wolfer, Joanne Turner Wolfe, Dennis Laib, Loren Laib, Alan Laib, Carol Maynard; 23 grandchildren; 45 great-grandchildren; six great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 13 at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, Ore.

Linscheid, M. Elizabeth Wiebe, 93, Bedford, Texas, died April 12. Spouse: Chester H. Linscheid (deceased). Parents: John E. and Helena Wiebe. Children: Helen Garrett, Mary Williams. Funeral: April 21 at First United Methodist Church, Keller, Texas.

Miller, Della L., 86, Louisville, Ohio, died April 7. Parents: David and Malinda Schloneger Miller. Funeral: April 11 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

Miller, Moses F., 88, Sarasota, Fla., died March 24. Spouse: Edna Mae Miller. Children: Floyd, Trudy, Margaret Sanders, Virginia; six grandchildren; 9 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 28 at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Rychener, Helen J. Nafziger, 81, Archbold, Ohio, died April 18. Spouse: Nelson Rychener (deceased). Parents: Harry J. and Rosa Short Nafziger. Children: Richard, Thomas, Nelson Jr., Victoria Lampert; 10 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 24 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Simpson, Anna Marie Weaver, 86, Millersburg, Ohio, died April 15 following an extended illness. Spouse: Robert Simpson (deceased). Parents: Eli J. and Mary Ann Hershberger Weaver. Funeral: April 17 at Martins Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg.

Smucker, Ernest Craig, 62, Topeka, Kan., died April 23. Parents: Ernest Edward and Mary Irene Liechty Smucker. Funeral: April 28 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Snyder, Jon Anthony, 65, Portland, Ore., died March 4 of injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Spouse: Janet Green Snyder. Parents: Albert William and Mauriel Ethel Nickerson Snyder. Children: Philip, David; five grandchildren. Funeral: March 10 at Portland Mennonite Church.

Wilhelm, Clayton J., 75, Waterloo, Ont., died April 22. Spouse: Rose Wilhelm. Children: Brenda McCom, James, Sandra Samuel; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Memorial service: April 27th at Waterloo North Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Ruth Glick, 80, Leo, Ind., died March 29 of injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Spouse: Lee Ivan Yoder. Parents: Daniel and Lillian Smoker Glick. Children: Judy Alger, Jerry, Jess; seven grandchildren. Funeral: April 4 at Church of the Good Shepherd, Leo.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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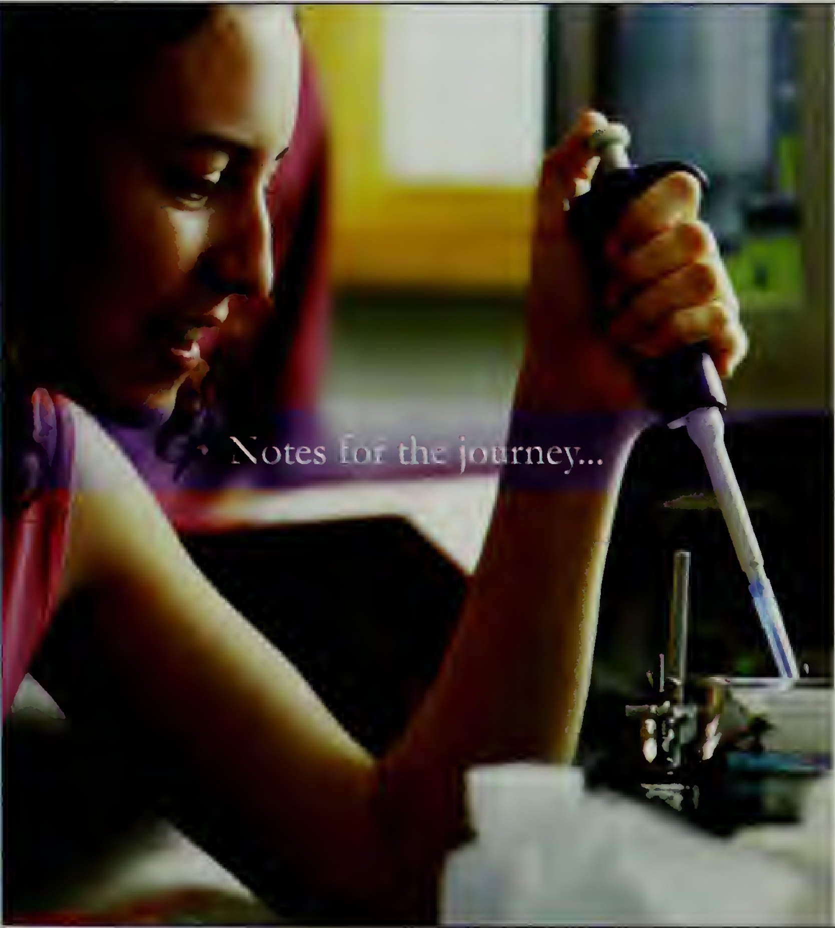
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North Clinton Mennonite Church will celebrate its ***50th anniversary June 23-24***. Saturday activities include antique car/tractor show, games, picnic supper and musical program. Sunday worship service will be held at 10:30 a.m. with former pastors Bob and Enid Schloneger. For complete information check www.northclinton.org.

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Central Christian School is seeking a ***full-time grade 7/8 science/math teacher*** and a ***full-time high school math teacher*** to begin August 2007. Central Christian School, Kidron, Ohio, www.ccscomets.org. Contact Henry Beun at 330- 857-7311 or hbeun@ccscomets.org.

Bluffton University is seeking a ***campus ministries intern***. This is a full-time, 10-month position, beginning Aug. 1. The intern will help give leadership to Christian spiritual life ministries on campus, including worship experiences, service opportunities, special events and discipling of students. For more information, go to www.bluffton.edu, call 419-358-3219 or contact intagliatas@bluffton.edu.

Bethany Christian Schools (grades 6-12; enrollment 285) invites applications for 2007-08 for the positions of ***instrumental music teacher***—75 percent load in instrumental music plus 25 percent in computer education. Responsibilities include MS orchestra, HS orchestra and jazz band. Applicants should hold or be qualified to obtain Indiana licensure. To apply, submit a resumé and letter of application to Allan Dueck, Principal, 2904 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-5499. Phone 574-534-2567; email akdueck@bethanycs.net.

Hyattsville Mennonite Church seeks a ***half to ¾-time associate pastor*** to serve with a lead pastor and focus on preaching, pastoral care and spiritual formation. HMC is a Christ-centered, welcoming church (regular attendance of 120) that is committed to peace and justice and to making historic Mennonite convictions relevant in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Seminary training is preferred. Interested people should email pastorsearch@hyattsvillemennonite.org and visit our Web site at www.hyattsvillemennonite.org

Full-time teaching positions available August 2007: ***biology/chemistry instructor*** (biology position could be half-time if applicant prefers part-time; ***physical education/health/athletic director***; ***mathematics*** (upper-level math). Coaching positions: head golf coach, assistant boys' basketball, assistant girls' basketball, head baseball (2008). Please contact Wilbur Yoder, principal, **Iowa Mennonite School**, 319-656-2073, wyoder@yahoo.com.

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Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore.; positions beginning August 2007. Western seeks ***female dorm leader*** for the high school dorm program. Responsibilities include mentoring students from various cultures and planning and supervising their weekday activities. Western seeks ***weekend dorm leaders***, one male and one female, to manage the high school weekend dorm program and promote a positive Christ-centered community. Leaders will plan and implement all weekend activities and meals with approximately one weekend off each month. Closing: May 28. Contact Beth Wadlow at 503-363-2000 (866-343-9378) or bethwadlow@gmail.com. Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 to local students and students from around the world. Located on 45 acres in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience. Western seeks exceptional candidates with a heart for youth and sharing Christ.

English conversation teachers needed. **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

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Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore., seeks a ***volunteer project coordinator*** for the construction of an 8,000-square-foot academic center. Duties include overseeing construction and being a liaison between Western, the architects and the general contractor. Please contact Darrel White at 866-343-9378 or djwhite@westernmennoniteschool.org. Western is located on 45 acres in Oregon's scenic Willamette Valley.

Goshen College is inviting applications for a ***biology professor*** (half-year sabbatical, Spring 2008) with special emphasis on teaching biology service courses for nonmajors. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

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'Hot for the apocalypse'

Gordon Houser

From rapture theology to global warming, many Americans feel a certain dread about the imminent end of life as we know it. And responses to this dread are not always healthy.

In a plenary address April 25 at the Associated Church Press convention in Chicago, Barbara Rossing, a New Testament scholar and ordained Lutheran minister, spoke about this sense of the end. She mentioned an article in *New York Magazine* last October that asked, "What do Christian millenarians, Islamic jihadists, Ivy League professors and aging Baby Boomers have in common?" The writer's answer: They're all "hot for the apocalypse."

Rossing's book *The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation* (Westview Press, 2004, $24) is a hard-hitting critique of the many books promoting a rapture theology (see my review in our Aug. 9, 2005, issue). It goes on to present a helpful interpretation of Revelation as a book of hope.

In her talk, she reflected on a pervasive sense of the end in our society. She quoted Peggy Noonan, who wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* that many people feel that "the wheels are coming off the trolley and the trolley off the tracks." Noonan observed that "elites," or higher-income people, respond to this unease about a coming end by shopping. Their attitude is, "I got mine; you get yours."

Rossing claimed we can learn from early Christians how to live with hope in a time of sickness and things ending. Just going shopping won't cut it, especially when one source of our suffering is "affluenza, the disease of more." We need to find a deeper source of healing and hope.

Rossing said she agrees that something is coming to an end, and she identifies that something as empire. At the heart of the Bible, she said, is the message of hope, to "come out of [Babylon]," (Revelation 18:4), which represents imperial violence.

Revelation, she said, offers two visions of the world: God's New Jerusalem and imperial Babylon. She argued that in the New Testament the Greek word "oikoumene," often translated "world," should usually be translated "empire."

Biblical prophecy, she said, is not prediction but a wake-up call. This is what will happen if you don't change your ways. (Compare the ghost's message to Scrooge in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.) The plagues in Revelation, therefore, are not predictions but warnings.

She said Revelation pictures two "nature hikes": one in Babylon, with warnings of consequences, and one in the New Jerusalem, a hope-filled, earth-centered vision.

Rapture theology, represented in popular culture by the Left Behind novels, is not based on the Bible but comes originally from John Darby, who lived in the 19th century. Besides being unbiblical and misrepresenting Revelation with its selective literalism, this theology tends to focus on the violent images in Revelation and ignore the vision of the New Jerusalem at the end of the book.

That vision can help us focus on the framework of sickness and healing instead of sin and guilt, Rossing said. The leaves of "the tree of life" (Revelation 22:2) are for "the healing of the nations."

Contrary to the imperial violence of empire and the destruction of God's creation, this healing vision calls us toward a restored Earth. Our response to the sense of the end is not to glory in the bloody deaths of enemies (as in the Left Behind books) or to just go shopping but to join in God's healing work.

The last book of the Bible is called an apocalypse. That word means "unveiling," Rossing said. John wants his readers to see what God is doing. Jesus' followers conquer not by violence but "by the blood of the Lamb and by the power of their testimony" (Revelation 12:11).

This article is available as a podcast beginning May 15 at www.themennonite.org. Check out our new Web site.

FILMS

Iraq in Fragments (unrated) was nominated for an Academy Award for best documentary. With its multilayered title, the film follows the lives of Iraqis in three different regions of Iraq. We learn up close the humanity and complexity of the people there. Almost universally they resent the presence of U.S. troops and companies. One man says, "America only knows force. They should study Iraqis." This film provides one opportunity.

DVDS

The Pursuit of Happyness (PG-13) recounts the true-life experiences of Chris Gardner, who became homeless in San Francisco with his 5-year-old son while he trained to become a stock broker. His positive attitude is remarkable, but the main value of the film is that it gets us in touch with what life is like for people without shelter or a means of livelihood.

BOOKS

Daily spiritual readings can help us in our search to be more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. Among recent books is **The Monastic Way: Ancient Wisdom for Contemporary Living: A Book of Daily Readings**, edited by Hannah Ward and Jennifer Wild (Eerdmans, 2007, $20), which gathers writings of monks and nuns from a wide variety of Christian spiritual tradition, both Eastern and Western. We learn from the "simplicity and directness" of mature monastics. A different approach is found in **Door to Silence: An Anthology for Christian Meditation** by John Main (Canterbury Press, 2006, $8.99), a collection of quotations to encourage slow, prayerful reading. It offers not only a guide for an interior personal journey but practical wisdom for every area of our lives, our work and our relationships. The text reads like nuggets of wisdom that encourage and assume the practice of meditation.

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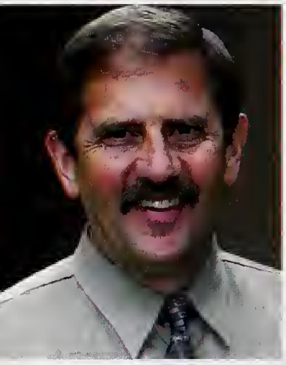

Everett J. Thomas

This article is available as a podcast beginning May 15 at www.thementonite.org. Check out our new Web site.

Health and justice

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Always keep yourselves united in the Holy Spirit, and bind yourselves together with peace. We are all one body, we have the same Spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future. There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and there is only one God and Father, who is over us all and in us all and living through us all.—Ephesians 4:1-6 NLT

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is the frame of reference for important discussions at the San José 2007 convention, to be held July 2-6 (see pages 8-17). One proposal coming to the delegates will test the unity described by Paul: a denomination-wide health-care plan for every pastor in which all congregations would participate. Some who are promoting the plan see it as a test of our mutual aid convictions. But such a plan is not so much about mutual aid; it is more about justice.

It is also an issue that touches every Mennonite Church USA member who is active in his or her congregation.

We can create peace by bringing justice to an inequity: lack of health insurance for pastors in churches that cannot afford it.

Mutual aid, by definition, implies reciprocity. I will help you now with my resources, and in the future, when I have a need, you will help me by providing some of your resources.

But the every-pastor health-care plan does not presume this reciprocity between congregations that have more or fewer resources. Rather it considers the inequity across the system from one congregation to another. Larger and wealthier congregations easily provide pastoral compensation that includes health-care coverage for their pastors, while some smaller and poorer congregations provide only a stipend and no insurance.

It is also an antiracism issue.

During the March 22-25 joint meeting of the Executive Board and the Constituency Leaders Council, Western District Conference minister Dorothy Nickel Friesen said that many of the poorer congregations whose pastors are not insured are underrepresented racial/ethnic members ("Do We Really Believe in Mutual Aid?" April 3).

Nickel Friesen also pointed out that some wealthier congregations are dropping out of the current Mennonite Church USA-sponsored plan, presumably to save money with other plans.

Our polity allows a great deal of congregational autonomy on many issues, including this one. So one of the first questions that needs to be resolved centers around the matter of mandate. If insurance for all pastors relies on nearly all congregations participating, what happens if a significant number of the wealthier congregations—that would need to pay more in order for poorer congregations to have coverage—decide to opt out?

Such a trend could jeopardize the plan. But other signs give hope that a 6-year-old Mennonite Church USA can pull it off. For example, Mennonite Church USA agencies have said they will either participate or cooperate with such a plan; those pools of employees would increase the efficiencies of scale needed for the plan.

Another reason for hope is our deep commitment to justice-making in other settings. Mennonite Church USA members continue to invest heavily in justice-making efforts through Mennonite Central Committee and Christian Peacemaker Teams. Many also see the work done through Mennonite Disaster Service as a way to bring justice to the poorest of the poor whose lives have been devastated by natural disaster.

As Paul says in Ephesians 4, we have all been called to one glorious future. Paul encourages us to bind ourselves together with peace. Mennonite Church USA will have a wonderful opportunity at San José 2007 to create a bit of peace by bringing some justice to an inequity that exists within our denominational body: lack of health insurance for pastors in poorer congregations that cannot afford it for their leaders.—*ejt*

Note: The next issue of *The Mennonite* will be dated June 5, 2007.

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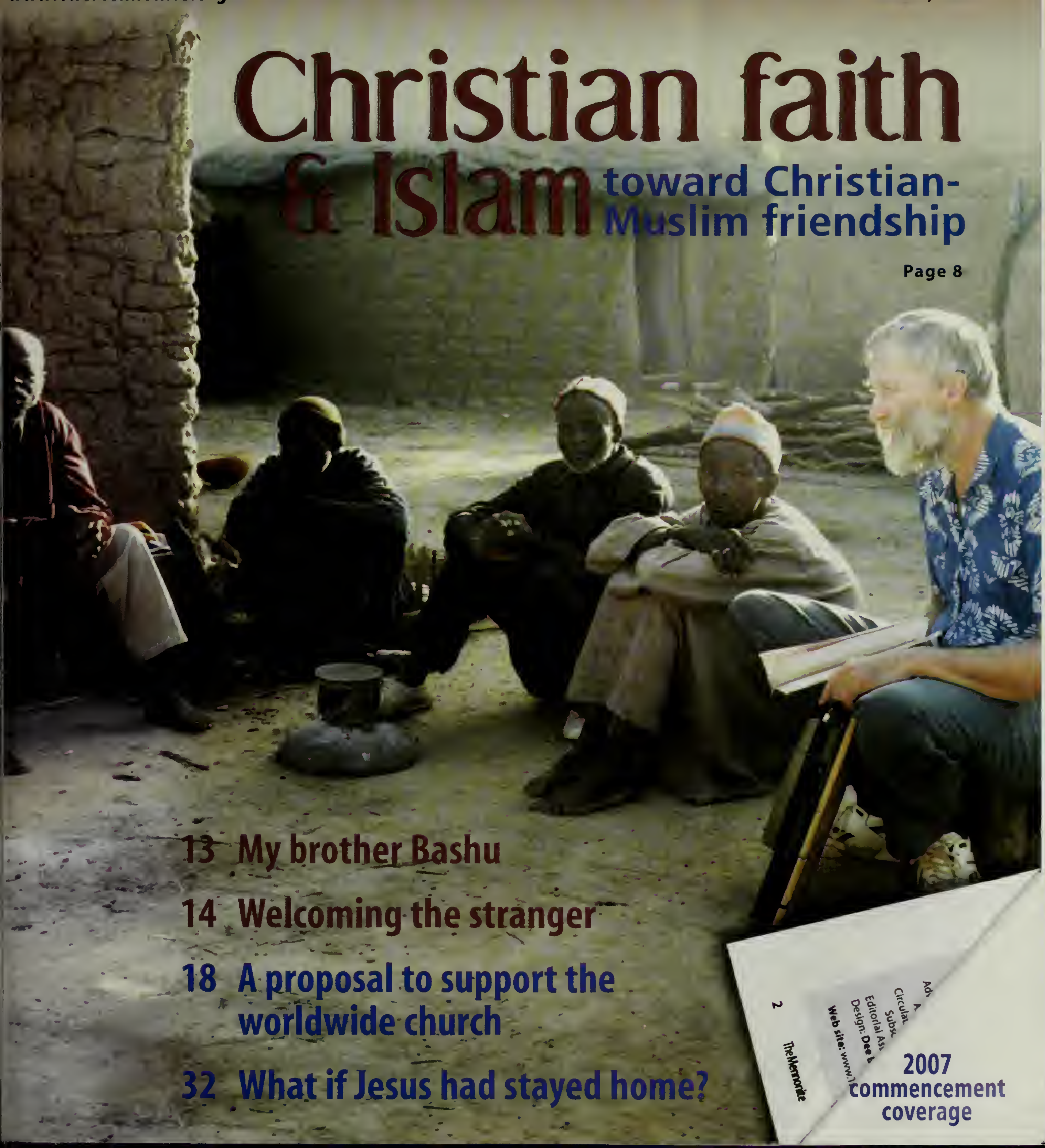

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2007 commencement coverage

A safe place

Kenneth Thompson is pastor of Friendship Community Church, Bronx, N.Y.

As a missional church, the quality of life and the conditions of the world concern us. We search for words and ways to deal with trials and tragedies like the Bluffton (Ohio) University bus crash; the Virginia Tech killings by that anguished, unattended soul; the rising death tolls in Iraq and Darfur; nuclear threats in Iran and Korea; severe storms wreaking havoc in the lives of many across the nation; more young men of color ages 18-24 dying in the streets of our cities from gun violence in one year than have died in four years of the war; the increasing pressure and temptation our boys face from alcoholism, drug use, violent video games and pornography; the scourge of obscene language and promiscuity afflicting our girls; more military recruiters baiting our young people with the lure of employment, education and travel that consigns them over to military conscription; the terrorist threats increasing both near and far. More and more we see and hear of the troubles in this world and we are left wondering, Is there no safe place?

Like Elijah fleeing into the cave at Mount Horeb, we take shelter in our local churches seeking a respite from the persistent troubles around us. Many of us are tempted to despair. Even as Elijah did, we yearn to see the grand display of God's kingdom to set things right.

Like Peter hearing the word of the Lord upon the waters, we step out in simple faith to respond to God's forward call—only to pause and falter in the face of the complex problems swirling around us. We know what we heard yet are too often moved by what we see and feel. Cold, cruel winds blow through this world, stir up waves that rise to mock us, sweeping past as if to say, Do you really have faith? We look toward the horizon to see God's coming glory, yet we see all too closely and clearly the gravity of the immediate situations, and like Peter we begin to sink.

Is there no safe place? There is when we realize peace is not a province we retreat to but a provision we respond from. If we think of peace merely as the cessation of violence or a refuge to isolate us from troubles, we mistake temporal tranquility for true heart-peace. Give place in your heart and mind to the peace God gives through Jesus Christ.

The answer for fear, pain and suffering and the desire for peace and safety are seldom found in cleverly composed statements that neatly order our perception of situations. We must steadily declare a faith developed and affirmed by the word and the Spirit of the One who overcame a world of problems. The faith of our Lord sometimes is best formed and made firm in the crucible of crisis, particularly when that faith is committed to peace. It's there we discover peace and safety are not the privilege of the served but the intentional product of those who serve to bring peace.

Safety is found and faith renewed when we realize, like Job, that every trial, no matter how severe, has limits. We understand that with God we develop a courageous hope that triumphs through every tragedy. A creative, compassionate community will help the wounded rise from an ashen brokenness to a wellspring of healing and wholeness.

May we understand that an abiding faith moves us to view adversity as an opportunity to speak authentically of God's peace. We can only be truly safe as we allow our faith to rise above merely reacting to what we see and instead be proactive with a vision that engages our hearts and hands. May we all move confidently in Jesus Christ, with his message and his methods, modeling communion with God and molding community with our neighbor. And make this world a safe place.

TheMennonite

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Cover: Loren Entz discusses an Old Testament story with village elders in Samogho, Burkina Faso. Photo: Donna Entz, courtesy Mennonite Mission Network

READERS SAY

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Check one: (82 votes)

○ I have an acquaintance who is Muslim. (37%)

○ I have a friend who is Muslim. (34%)

○ I do not know anyone who is Muslim. (29%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Health insurance not just for pastors

In response to "Health and Justice" by Everett J. Thomas (May 15 editorial), I'd like to encourage all Mennonite congregations to participate in the plan to provide insurance for all Mennonite pastors. But I think we are deluding ourselves if we perceive this as an answer to our health-care situation in the United States. Even within Mennonite congregations there are impoverished folks without insurance. Offering insurance to their pastors is wonderful, but what about congregational members? Managing health dollars in the United States will require nationwide reform. Demand for health care is limitless; money is not.

Who dictates that a wealthy Mennonite gets to enjoy the benefits of Medicare coverage and yet a poor immigrant woman in Georgia cannot access Medicaid to receive her prenatal care? Because I work for a nonprofit serving those immigrant women, I do not have access to group health insurance benefits. Justice in the health-care arena extends way beyond offering our pastors insurance.—*Joy Hostetler, Atlanta*

Angry about including Kings View

I am responding to Stuart W. Showalter's article "To the Least of Our Neighbors: The Search for Access to Mental Health Care" (April 17). Much of what Showalter says could not be argued against: 46.6 million without health-care coverage in this country sounds about right, and his extrapolation of the data for Mennonites sounds about right. The availability of quality space at Philhaven sounds like it is as it is everywhere (too few beds for the population). My primary problem comes when Showalter talks about "availability across the country." He says, "These organizations include well established and highly respected treatment centers such as Philhaven and Penn Foundation in Pennsylvania, Brooklane in Maryland, Oaklawn in Indiana, Prairie View in Kansas and Kings View in California."

Since I assume that much of the Showalter piece has to do with inpatient facilities, he must surely know that when referring to Kings View he is not talking about an inpatient facility. That "facility" has been closed since the early part of the 1990s, and including it in this article dealing pretty much with inpatient facilities provides me with some of my highest degree of anger about Mennonites and mental health. If Showalter does not know that Kings View Psychiatric Hospital is closed, I wonder where he is getting some of the rest of his information.

In the greater Fresno area (close to 1 million people) there are now less than 30 inpatient beds. Fresno is also a large Mennonite community on the West Coast. We would love to have some of you Easterners come and visit us—especially if you are going to write about us and mental health.—*Jim Compton-Schmidt, Fresno, Calif.*

Polishing the truth

Does polishing the truth advance the kingdom of God? We advertise "The Mennonite Piano Concerto" on a CD to help Mennonite Central Committee but avoid saying that the musical numbers come with many speeches. We announce a Bethel College Choir concert—again with not-a-few speeches before and/or after every piece—that are not revealed ahead of time. The speeches may seem even longer because of the misleading sales pitches. Some influential church members likewise supported a school tax (that I also supported) with misleading claims. Even bigger misrepresentations are too touchy to present here.

I suppose most of us go to hear some speeches, announced openly beforehand. Many of us, however, also criticize politicians, reporters and salesmen for their deceptive sales pitches. We say that our work is for a good cause, but so do those other people. We also say that the end does not justify the means.

Jesus challenged religious leaders sharply, and we take him as our model. Maybe we can risk trying to correct each other in love, hard as that is, knowing that none of us is perfect. When selling anything, let's practice what we preach. Start at home and present the facts.—*Ronald Rich, Bluffton, Ohio*

IN THIS ISSUE

We seldom publish an article as developed as David W. Shenk's "Three Journeys" (page 8). But in this issue we provide the pages necessary so Shenk can review the history of the Christian church and its relationship to the Muslim world. "The confrontation between Islam and the West is not trivial," Shenk writes. "The West is largely incapable of engaging Islam at the spiritual level, for Islam is a profoundly spiritual and scriptural movement." Shenk concludes by saying every Christian needs a Muslim friend. John C. Murray (page 13) describes his Muslim "brother," Bashu, who lives in rural India. When Bashu asked Murray whether Muslims and Christians are brothers in America, Murray asks, "How could I tell him that in America many [Christians] believe the word 'Muslim' and the word 'terrorist' are synonyms?" In this issue we also publish another in our series of congregational profiles (pages 16-17) and complete coverage of the seven commencements on the campuses of Mennonite Church USA colleges, universities and seminaries (page 20).—*Editor*

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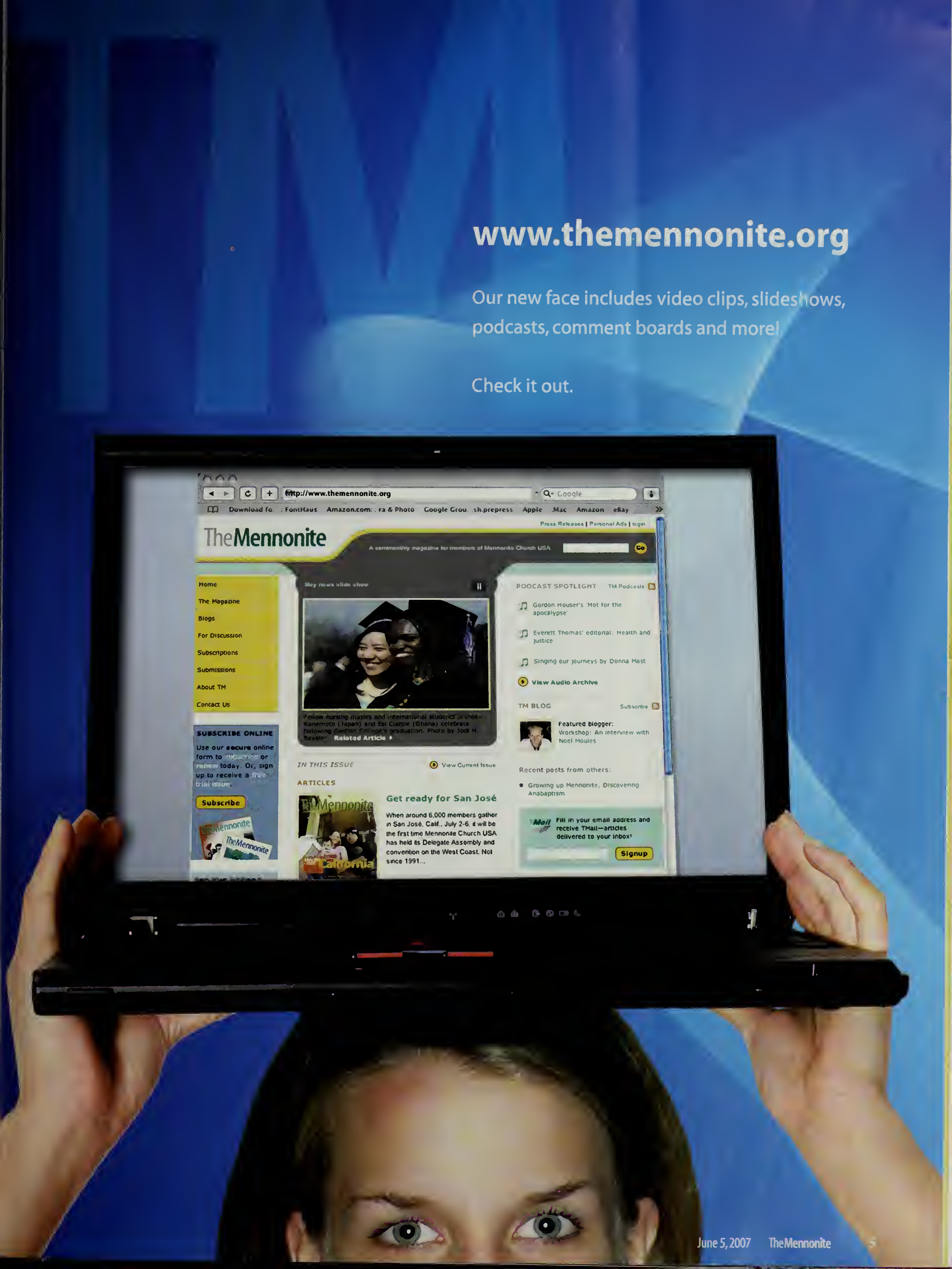
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A semimonthly magazine for members of Mennonite Church USA

May news slide show

Fellow nursing majors and international students Shihoko Kanemoto (Japan) and Esi Cudjoe (Ghana) celebrate following Goshen College's graduation. Photo by Jodi H. Beyeler **Related Article**

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IN BRIEF

Bethel, Goshen athletes are national champs

Three athletes from Mennonite colleges won their events at the NAIA Track and Field Championships May 24-26 in Fresno, Calif. Jeff Buller, a junior at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., won the javelin with a toss of 65.92 meters (216 feet three inches). Petrana Petkova, a senior at Goshen (Ind.) College, won the 10,000-meter run in 36:27.01. She also finished third in the 5,000-meter run. Tina Peters, a freshman at Goshen, won the 3,000-meter race walk in 15:20.21. The Goshen women tied for eighth place, and Bethel tied for 21st. *—Gordon Houser*

MDS responds to Kansas tornado

An F5 tornado on May 4 destroyed at least 95 percent of Greensburg, Kan., leaving 12 dead. Those wanting to volunteer may call the Kansas volunteer coordinator, Marvin Penner, at 985-291-1296. MDS director Kevin King says, "MDS appreciates the assistance from Mennonite Central Committee Central States as they fielded countless calls regarding the disaster and got people in touch with MDS, as was needed." For up-to-date information, check the MDS Web site, www.mds.mennonite.net/.*—MDS*

Lee Eshleman of Ted & Lee duo dies

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Late in the afternoon of May 17, Lee Eshleman, 43, lost a long struggle with depression and took his life at his Harrisonburg home.

Surviving are Reagan, his wife, and children Nicolas, 12, Sarah, 10, and Gabe, 5, along with countless friends and fans of Ted & Lee around the world.

Lee Eshleman

"It feels like there's a piece of me missing," says Ted Swartz. The dramatic duo Ted & Lee began in 1987 and has performed regularly at retreats and conferences for just about every denomination and were featured performers at national events.

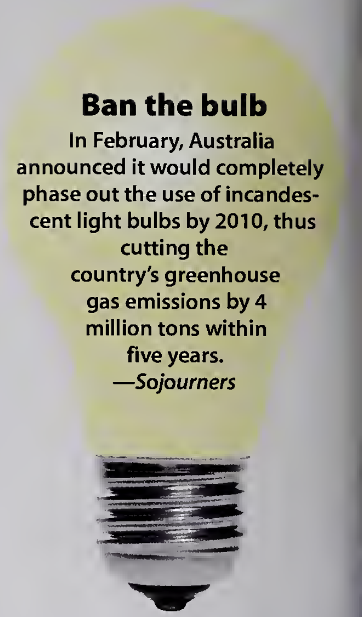
Ted & Lee performances at the Mennonite Church USA convention in July in San Jose, Calif. have been cancelled. Mennonite Mission Network had commissioned them to write and perform a new show, "Eccentric Entermission," to be presented during several seminar sessions. Because of Mennonite Media's documentary work on mental illness and suicide, media staff will work with Swartz to replace these seminars.

Sheri Hartzler, Ted & Lee's agent, will be in touch with those who have booked an upcoming show to discuss future possibilities. For more information, go to www.TedandLee.com.

Eshleman was born Aug. 28, 1963, in Richmond, Va., the son of J. Robert and Rosalie Hartman Eshleman of Midlothian, Va., who survive. Also surviving are a brother, Curtis Eshleman and wife, Brigetta Nilsen Eshleman, of Lynchburg, Va., a paternal grandmother, Arlene Eshleman of Indiana; and three nieces.

People may send checks for the Eshleman Family Fund to Community Mennonite Church (include Eshleman Family Fund on the memo line), 70 S. High St., Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

The Lee Eshleman Memorial Fund has been established by the Eastern Mennonite School, Class of 1981. Submit check to Eastern Mennonite School, 801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, and write Lee in the memo line or go to www.emhs.net and select Giving Opportunities in the Quick Link box. Enter Lee Eshleman Memorial Fund in the comment section of the giving Web page.*—Jim Bishop and Anna Groff*



Ban the bulb

In February, Australia announced it would completely phase out the use of incandescent light bulbs by 2010, thus cutting the country's greenhouse gas emissions by 4 million tons within five years. *—Sojourners*

Lancaster churches discuss ordination vote

LANCASTER, Pa.—More than 60 people from nine congregations gathered at the James Street Mennonite Church May 16 to discuss how they might respond to the recent decision by Lancaster Mennonite Conference (LMC) not to allow ordination for women (Feb. 6, page 19).

"Very low on the list of options was to leave LMC," said Linford King, overseer-bishop for the Lancaster City District, "and join another conference or start a new conference." Most people want to stay connected to LMC and go ahead with ordinations; the Lancaster district of LMC has formed its own credentialing committee to interview candidates, King said.

"The major impetus to move in this direction is the 1995 Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective," King said, "our full participation as members with Mennonite Church USA, and the recent Executive Board's Affirmation for the Gifts of Women." Meanwhile, some at the meeting talked of "taking a leave of absence" from LMC and entering a "safe house" free of conference policies and participation."

James Street Mennonite church is planning a service of ordination June 24 for Elizabeth Nissley.

Larry Bartel

Homeschool students study science at Hesston

Katy Hendricks and Laura Harms, both from Newton, Kan., work on an electronic circuit board during the third annual science and computer camp for homeschool students May 14-18 at Hesston (Kan.) College. The students have or will soon finish eighth grade through 12th grade.*—Hesston College*

MMA photo

A president commissioned

n Yoder (right), MMA [Mennonite Mutual Aid] Board of ctors chair, tells new president Larry Miller that "many of 's blessings come to us in the form of new opportunities." er, who began his service in January, expressed hope that organization will help church members have a "transfor- ional experience" in using their resources in ways that or God. —*MMA*

In 1993, Nissley was licensed by LMC to serve in the Mount Joy (Pa.) Mennonite Church. In 2002, she began serving as associate pastor at the James Street congregation.—The Mennonite *from reports*

Goshen to offer master's degree in nursing

GOSHEN, Ind.—Building on its 57-year history of educating nurses known for their excellent clinical knowledge, high ethical standards and caring attitudes, the Goshen College Nursing Department will offer a Master of Science degree in nursing starting this fall, President James E. Brenneman announced May 1.

The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools officially accredited the new master's program—with tracks for family nurse practitioner and clinical nurse leader—April 25. The first cohort of students will begin August.

Since 1998, the department has doubled the number of undergraduate nursing students, from 65 to 130, and increased the number of Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing students from 10 to 50 in response to the shortages. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing predicts that by 2015, half the current nursing workforce of 2.6 million will retire.—*Goshen College*

Preheim named Historical Committee director

NEWTON, Kan.—Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership has appointed Rich Preheim of Elkhart, Ind., director of the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee. Preheim has been its interim director part-time since October 2006 and will begin work as full-time director Sept. 1.

Preheim will work from the Goshen Archives on the campus of Goshen (Ind.) College, one of two archive locations administered by the Historical Committee. The North Newton Archives are located on the Bethel College campus in North Newton, Kan.

The Historical Committee, a ministry of Executive Leadership, is responsible for nurturing the denomination's historical consciousness through its two archives, publishing Mennonite Historical Bulletin, sponsoring a student research contest, planning conferences and making historical resources available to the church.

Rich Preheim

Preheim is finishing a book on the history of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. He began research for the book while working as a free-lance writer after serving nearly 12 years as an editor for the *Mennonite Weekly Review* and *The Mennonite.—Mennonite Church USA*
—compiled by Gordon Houser

Join hands
Stop AIDS
hands
IDS

Photo provided

On their way to San José

Cookie and Dave Wiebe left Memorial Day to ride their tandem bike 2,007 miles from their home in Newton, Kan., to the Mennonite Church USA biennial convention, held July 2-6 in San José, Calif. Their goal is to raise $10,000, enough to provide bicycles for 126 health workers in Zambia, Uganda and Kenya through Mennonite Central Committee's Generations at Risk program. They will post their adventures at www.charitableliving.net.—*MCC Central States*

IN BRIEF

Lapp to retire as head of MARP

Helen Lapp, the executive director of the Mennonite Association of Retired Persons (MARP), announced May 1 that she will retire this fall. Lapp has served as MARP's executive director since the fall of 1999. During these years MARP has grown to approximately 4,500 members in 40 states. Early in her term, MARP developed its own Web site with links to information about issues, reviews and programs relevant to older adults. Programming also grew during Lapp's tenure as MARP's leader.—*MARP*

Bees and women

- Average percentage of food Americans consume that is dependent on honeybee pollination: 33
- Dollars worth of seeds and crops honeybees annually pollinate in the United States: 14 billion
- Percentage of bees on the East Coast that have vanished due to Colony Collapse Disorder: 60
- Percentage of bee loss keepers consider normal: 20
- Years Albert Einstein estimated humans could live if all bees died: 4
- Percentage of non-Muslims in the United States who believe Muslims are disrespectful of women: 69
- Percentage of Muslims in Pakistan who believe Westerners are disrespectful of women: 52

—*Yes!* magazine

Three jou

by David W. Shenk

Shortly after the 9/11/2001 attacks, I asked Mark Oxbrow, a missions director with the Church Missions Society of the Church of England, "What do you say in churches in the United Kingdom when you are asked to speak on the Christian faith and Islam?"

Dreamstime.com

Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem

Mark said, "I speak about three different journeys for peace: Jesus, Constantine and Muhammad. Those different journeys are options for each of us, and each of us needs to choose which one we will take."

The journey of Jesus to Jerusalem: Jesus was at the height of his popularity in Galilee after feeding the 5,000 men plus women and children by blessing and breaking five loaves of bread and two fish. The Galileans tried to make him their king "by force" (John 6:15). Jesus resisted that invitation and "set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). In the following weeks, Jesus tried to make his disciples aware that in Jerusalem the authorities will arrest the Son of Man and "mock him, insult him, spit on him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again" (Luke 18:32-33).

The disciples could not fathom that an arrest and death were possibilities for the Messiah. Peter rebuked Jesus for such notions, and Jesus responded sharply, "Get behind me Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things" (Matthew 16:23).

Finally, as Jesus approached Jerusalem, he mounted a colt. Jubilant children sang hosannas, yet as he saw the city before him, he wept because Jerusalem would not receive "the things that make for peace" (Luke 19:42). Then he and the youngsters entered the temple and cleansed it of the merchants who were corrupting the whole system with their exploitative practices.

In that colt ride he was proclaiming the fulfillment of two biblical prophesies in regard to the messianic kingdom.

First, he was fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy of five centuries earlier. Most frequently we read only the introduction to the prophecy and miss the universal, peacemaking, nonviolent and voluntary messianic rule that Jesus was announcing in riding that colt into Jerusalem (Zechariah 9:9-10).

Second, Jesus was fulfilling Ezekiel's prophecy that the radiant glory of God would enter Jerusalem from the East, fill the temple with the glory of God, and cleanse the temple of all corruption forever (Ezekiel 43:1-9).

If Jesus came to establish the kingdom of God, how did he do that?

First, he drove those who exploited the poor from the temple precincts. He made it known that the temple of stone was needed no more. He was the new temple; later the apostles proclaimed that the church as the body of Christ was the temple. The place was not necessary in the kingdom Jesus was establishing. The place of the kingdom was wherever Christ was welcomed.

In that suffering embrace, the kingdom of God breaks into human experience.

Second, during his last meal with his disciples, Christ washed the feet of his betrayer. The One who is the radiant glory of God who created the 50 billion galaxies in space washes the feet of his betrayer.

Third, as Jesus is dying on the cross, he asks for forgiveness of those who have crucified him. This is God in Christ seeking to embrace the world in his reconciling invitation. In that suffering embrace, we are reconciled to God and to one another and with all of creation; in that embrace the kingdom of God breaks into human experience.

Fourth, after his resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples several times. He showed them the

neys

The journeys of Jesus, Constantine and Muhammad

nail prints in his hands and the wound from the spear. Then he said to them, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you. … Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:21-22).

Weeks later the Holy Spirit came upon the gathering of disciples, and from then on the apostolic church believed that the journey of Jesus from Galilee to the cross in Jerusalem is the way of the kingdom of God. These first Christians believed that in the crucified Jesus the God of all creation suffers for us and because of us. He identifies fully with the suffering of all humanity and especially with the outcasts and powerless; he is crucified between two thieves. He suffers a cursed death, hung on a tree (Galatians 3:13) outside the centers of power; he dies in disgrace at Golgotha "outside the camp" (Hebrews 13:13). This one who is crucified with the outcasts, stripped of earthly power, is in fact the presence and revelation of the power of God. Christ crucified and risen is the power center of the universe; he is the Lamb slain who stands in the center of the throne of God (Revelation 5:6). In his sacrifice Christ forgives and redeems people from "every tribe and language and people and nation" (Revelation 5:9). Christ crucified—the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).

For the apostolic church, all kingdom ethics were grounded in the reality that in Christ crucified God has revealed himself to be our suffering servant. Jesus said, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another" (John 13:34). The Apostle Paul wrote, "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus … who … emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, … he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:5-8).

For the next three centuries, the church insisted that a cross-centered ethic meant that a disciple of Jesus could not take arms.

For the next three centuries, the church insisted that a cross-centered ethic meant that a disciple of Jesus could not take arms. This was costly, for the church was often persecuted for refusing to venerate the emperor. Yet the church confessed Jesus as Lord—therefore disciples of Jesus could not venerate the emperor or participate in practices in variance with the way of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christians would not participate in sacrifices to the spirit of the emperor and in the imperial military. Origen insisted that Christians desist from any participation in warfare.

Celsus accused the church of abandoning the responsibilities of patriotic citizenship. Origen responded: "Even more do we fight on behalf of the emperor. And though we do not become fellow-soldiers with him, even if he presses for this, yet we are fighting [for] him and composing a special army of piety through our intercessions to God."

Remarkably the early church thrived without the benefit of political support. It was a minority movement on the margins; yet the crucified and risen Christ it gave witness to was powerfully attractive.

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Arch of Constantine, Rome

The journey of Constantine to Rome: The church's commitment to a cross-centered kingdom commitment underwent a dramatic transformation when Constantine gained the Roman imperial throne. For months Constantine had been engaged in a long march from Britain south to Rome, where he knew he would meet in battle Maxentius, his rival to imperial power and his enemy. Constantine commanded only 40,000 troops. Maxentius had the full force of the garrison in Rome at his command. Constantine turned to the divine sun in worship, a commitment he never fully abandoned.

On the eve of battle, Constantine allegedly saw

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the sign of the cross in the sky with the words beneath that cross: “In hoc signo vinces” (“under this sign conquer”). He took that as an omen and painted the “chi rho” sign of Christ crucified on his weapons of war. The next day, Constantine won a decisive victory. He went on to become emperor of the Western empire, and Licinius became emperor of the Eastern empire. In his wars in the East, Licinius also reported a message from God.

Within a year, Constantine and Licinius issued the Edict of Milan (A.D. 313), which assured religious freedom throughout the Roman Empire, not only for Christians but for all faiths.

Constantine tilted the Western empire toward favoring the church. The historian Eusebius was ecstatic when Constantine ordered Bibles to be made available for leaders in his seat of government in Constantinople. Eusebius believed a Christian civilization would unite political and ecclesial authority and power.

The Constantinian cross used as a weapon for violence against the enemy is not the cross of the one who proclaimed forgiveness for his enemies as he died absorbing their taunting violence.

With astounding rapidity the church was seated with empire at the centers of power. Nowhere was that more evident than in the Council of Nicea (325), where the unbaptized Constantine presided over a council of bishops to determine Christological and Trinitarian doctrine. Constantine not only presided at the opening sessions but also implemented instruments of force to impose the decisions made at Nicea on recalcitrant churches, as for example the Donatists of North Africa.

Under Constantine, Christianity in the West had become transformed into the religion of Western empire. This legacy provided the paradigm for what became known as the Holy Roman Empire, and later as Western Christendom.

For the church in Persia, developments in the Western church became the sentence of death.

For the church in Persia, developments in the Western church became the sentence of death. The Roman Empire and Persia had engaged in several centuries of conflict. Another war was pending when Constantine wrote to the Shah of Persia, Shapur II: “I rejoice to hear that the fairest provinces of Persia are adorned with … Christians. … Since you are so powerful and pious, I commend them to your care, and leave them in your protection.”

For the Shah, this letter meant Christians were a fifth column representing Rome by sabotaging Zoroastrian Persia from within. Twenty years later Constantine massed his troops for war against Persia, with bishops accompanying his armies.

The rage of the Persians against the Christians knew no boundaries. For more than 20 years the Christians were systematically hunted from one end of the empire to the other, tortured and killed. The Persian Church was nearly eradicated. It has never recovered from that blow. Since Constantine, the church in the East has sought to make it clear that it is not beholden to the church in the West. Constantine and the development of Christendom have made it necessary for churches of the East to become alternatives to the Western church.

The Constantinian transformation in the Western church contributed to the opening for Islam in the East. This is because the persecutions in Persia decimated the church. It also meant that the churches of the East had to distance themselves from the churches of the West. One way they did this was by defining their theology as an alternative to that of the West.

We should ask, Are there themes within the U.S. church today that are similar to those of the Constantinian era? How does the perceived alliance of the U.S. evangelical churches with the U.S. international agenda affect the vulnerable churches in Muslim lands?

These questions confronted me when I engaged in several days of dialogue with a Muslim theologian in Germany, after I had presented the journey of Jesus to the cross as the way of peace. She turned to me and with anger said: “This is the first time I have ever heard that the cross has anything to do with peace. Our Muslim perception is that the cross is a symbol of violence and that the Christian movement is a violent religion.” I wept as I asked her forgiveness for the sins of the church in distorting the cross and the gospel so tragically.

After a break, she took the floor and thanked me for my tears of repentance. Then she said: “I have never before experienced a Christian asking forgiveness for the sins of the church against us Muslims. Your confession has opened my eyes to a Jesus I never knew was there, and I have been transformed.”

We now explore another journey that birthed an alternative vision of religion and territoriality, that of the Muslims.

The journey of Muhammad to Medina: Six centuries after Christ and three centuries after Constantine, the unlettered Muhammad began preaching in Mecca in Arabia, among a people who were on the periphery of civilization and power. For 12 years he proclaimed portions of the Qur'an as they came to him. He warned the Meccans to leave their polytheistic worship and evil practices. He preached a message of hope for the poor and compassion for the dispossessed.

Few Meccans accepted Muhammad's message, for he challenged the entrenched networks of polytheism that supported the political and economic structures of Arabian society. However, emissaries from Medina invited him to come to their city and become their prophet and statesman—the same invitation Jesus had received from the Galileans six centuries earlier. Muhammad accepted the invitation, believing that this was a sign of favor from God.

This migration to Medina is the "hijrah," which took place in 622. This event is the beginning of the Muslim era—not the birth of Muhammad in 570 or the advent of revelations in 610. This event enabled Muhammad to gain political and military control of a region. With those instruments of power he and his followers established the "dar al Islam," the region under Muslim political control.

In Medina a constitution was developed that in later centuries formed the nucleus for full-fledged Muslim systems of law known as the "Shari'a." The goal of the Medina constitution was to include all minorities within a covenant of cooperation with the Muslims. The Muslims were disappointed when some minority communities resisted inclusion in the Muslim-led covenant. Subsequently these dissidents were perceived to be a threat to the Muslim community and were dealt with as traitors. Judgment included banishment or death.

Battles ensued between the Meccans and the Muslim armies; the Muslims were victorious, and within 10 years the defeated Meccans received a triumphant army of 10,000 Muslim soldiers. The Muslims then cleansed the Ka'bah of its idolatries, and Mecca became a Muslim city.

Wherever dar al Islam was established, Christian, Jewish or Zoroastrian communities were circumscribed "a dhimmi," protected communities. They were assured peace, providing they functioned within the parameters established by the Muslim state. This included paying a special tax. Regions outside the dar al Islam were the "dar al harb," or regions of war not yet brought under the control of Muslim authorities.

Muhammad left the suffering of Mecca for Medina, and later returned to Mecca as victor. This pattern is normative. Defeat for the faithful Muslim ummah is a theological anomaly, for God is all powerful and sovereign. Tactical retreat might be necessary, but in time the dar al Islam of the Muslims must prevail.

Although Muslims are not to initiate aggression, if the ummah is under threat, then defense of the ummah is mandated by any means necessary. This is jihad, a three-dimensional striving in the defense of Islam (1) within one's soul, (2) with the pen and (3) with the sword when necessary.

The ummah will persuade and even seek to induce non-Muslims to convert but are prohibited from using coercion to convert. The Qur'an says: "There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error."

In modern times the dar al Islam vision of Muslim territoriality persists. This is why U.S. military bases in Saudi Arabia in the wake of the Gulf War of 1991 became so deliberate, apparently contributing to decisions by militant jihadists to initiate the tragedy of 9/11.

> **The conflict is intensifying between Islamic theocratic systems and the secular democratic systems of the West.**

However, at the beginning of the 21st century one-fourth (300 million) of all Muslims live in regions outside the suzerainty of Muslim authority. This is a great transformation. Notions of a monolithic idealized dar al Islam is diluted by the realities of modern mobility and globalization. The vision for a dar al Islam and Muslim diaspora are often in tension.

Christendom and the dar al Islam: In Christendom, the world is divided into two regions—the civilized regions ruled by Christianized governments and the uncivilized regions ruled by other kinds of governments. In the dar al Islam, the world is divided into regions of peace under Muslim rule and regions of war not yet brought under Muslim rule.

Dreamstime.com

Arabic arches, Medina Azahara, Spain

Christendom fights just wars; the dar al Islam fights jihads. Christendom seeks to extend territory, extending democracy and free enterprise into regions not yet democratized. The dar al Islam likewise has fought wars to extend the blessings of Islam into non-Islamized societies. Both movements have occasionally merged their missionary impulse with imperialist nationalist goals.

Today the conflict is intensifying in the clash between Islamic theocratic systems and the secular democratic systems of the West.

So what? The confrontation between Islam and the West is not trivial. Both movements are mov-

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ing to the edge of the precipice. The West is largely incapable of engaging Islam at the spiritual level, for Islam is a profoundly spiritual and scriptural movement. Too often the church is incapable of addressing the conflict at a spiritual and scriptural basis. Yet a New Testament vision of the church as a community committed to the way of the cross Jesus reveals, is healing for the nations and healing for our times. This was my impression when participating in a Muslim Shi'ite-Anabaptist dialogue with Iranian theologians, a dialogue sanctioned by the Guardian Council in Iran.

Every Christian needs a Muslim friend. I also wish every Muslim had a Christian friend. And friends never kill each other.

A significant dimension of these conversations took place in Toronto in 2003 with a follow-up in Qom, Iran, in 2004. Anabaptists have miniscule political power. Yet the Islamic theological establishment in Qom invited the conversation. Still, the journey in dialogue and witness is challenging.

"Do not humiliate us," a mullah in Qom, Iran, advised me when I asked what his counsel is to North American Christians.

Another said Jesus would also have taken the same path Muhammad took in Medina, if he had an opportunity. His public ministry lasted only three years. Given more time, Jesus would also have commanded an army.

"But thanks be to God," the mullah exclaimed, "Constantine brought to conclusion what Jesus could not do, for Constantine, like Muhammed, united the political and religious order."

But the New Testament vision of the kingdom of God is radically different from the understandings of these Shi'a Muslim clerics. Yet they listened. They engaged. We based our dialogue on the Scriptures—supremely for us the New Testament—a Christ-centered dialogue.

Others commented that never before have they spoken with Christians about faith in serious open dialogue. This is significant.

Even more significant are the hundreds and thousands of friendships that Christians meeting Muslims are developing in neighbor-to-neighbor relationships, whether in North America or regions around the world.

Surely all followers of Jesus are called of God to transcend territorial divisions and in the spirit of Christ serve in ways that enable wider and wider circles of Christians and Muslims to meet one another. Every Christian needs a Muslim friend. I also wish every Muslim had a Christian friend. And friends never kill each other.

David W. Shenk has served in missions in East Africa with a focus on Islam and is global missions consultant with Eastern Mennonite Missions. He is a member of Mountville (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Quick facts about Islam

- Islam began with the prophet Muhammed in Arabia in the sixth and seventh centuries after Christ. However, Muslims believe Islam began with God's revelation to Adam, who was the first Muslim, and Muhammad clarified the Islam that is the original religion of humanity.
- Islam is the world's fastest-growing religion, the principal reason being when one is born into a Muslim family, he or she is automatically a Muslim. In terms of numbers of "converts," Christianity is the fastest-growing. Muslim growth is mostly through progeny.
- "Islam" means to "submit" to Allah.
- "Islam" is derived from "salaam," which is Arabic for "peace."
- Muhammed preached that there is only one God and that this God cannot be worshiped with idols.
- In about A.D. 610, Muhammed claimed to have received the revelation of the Qur'an from the angel Gabriel. The revelations continued for 22 years, coming in portions.
- Muslims revere Muhammed as a prophet but do not worship him. They believe Muhammad is the seal of the prophets and therefore the perfect example.
- Qu'ran is to the Muslim what Jesus is to the Christian, in the sense that the Qu'ran is the defining revelation of truth, as is Jesus in the Christian faith. It enables one to submit to God, to struggle against social injustices, to work for world peace and to achieve ideals for a renewed social order.
- Jihad is of two kinds. The greater jihad is to "struggle" spiritually with oneself. The lesser jihad seeks to avenge wrongs done to Islam. Sept. 11 confirms that one interpretation of jihad and one interpretation of fundamentalism can be violent, even terroristic.
- Some Muslims contend that "evil in the name of Allah blasphemes Allah."
- The American Muslim Council contends "there is no cause that justifies [the] type of immoral and inhuman act that has affected so many innocent lives."

From Missio Dei: Understanding Islam *by Calvin E. Shenk. Copyright 2002 by Mennonite Mission Network, Elkhart, IN 46515. All rights reserved. Used by permission. For ordering information call 574-294-7523 or email missiodei@mennonitemission.net.*

Photo provided

Trust and gratitude: John and Rahamon

My brother Bashu

by John C. Murray

A Christian and Muslim weep and pray together.

My brother Bashu and I walked side by side along the dusty road through the rural Indian village of Chiluvuru. Our destination was the Muslim cemetery at the edge of the village. My brother's son had been buried there five months earlier.

Bashu is not my natural brother, which would have been obvious had you seen us walking together in the hot tropical sun. The deep brown color of his skin was a beautiful contrast to the pale but reddening color of my skin.

We are not brothers by language or culture. Bashu, a resident of this small rural village in India, speaks Urdu and Telugu and a little broken English. I live in a small town in the United States. I speak English and little broken Telugu.

We are not brothers by religious tradition. Bashu is a Muslim, I'm a Christian. But one day Bashu called me his brother, and I have embraced his perception of our relationship. We are brothers at the deepest level of humanity. We are united in love and peace, seekers of faith, hope, comfort and God amid the grief and uncertainties of life.

As we walked to the cemetery, we shared only the silence of a holy journey. Bashu wore beige pants and a muted plaid cotton shirt not unlike the clothes many men wear in any American small town. I wore a grey kurta not unlike the clothes worn by many men of the villages of India. It was a kurta Bashu himself had made for me.

Bashu's son Rahamon had lived 16 years and 11 days before his body succumbed to the cerebral palsy and the cystic brain tumor that afflicted him since he was a small child.

Rahamon was 10 years old when I first met him. He was full of life and energy. His physical and mental impairments did not hinder his joyful enthusiasm for life. He welcomed this white-faced visitor from America to the mud walled, thatched roof hut he called home with a smile that seemed to radiate from his spirit. He kept calling to his mother to bring more tea for his guest. Before I left, Bashu asked me to pray for his son. I laid my hands on my young friend and prayed that the sustaining love and healing grace of God would be present with Rahamon and Bashu and their family.

In subsequent visits to Chiluvuru I always stopped and visited Bashu in his tailor shop. He was always glad for a visitor to share conversation while his bare, calloused feet made his treadle sewing machine whirr. He always invited me to his home to visit his family and pray for Rahamon.

The last time I visited Rahamon, his arms and legs were unable to support him. He was no longer able to speak. Bashu carried Rahamon outside to the cot where I sat, and he lovingly placed his son next to me. I put my arm around Rahamon as he leaned against me. His eyes communicated welcome and weariness, trust and gratitude. When I said goodbye, I sensed Rahamon would die before I returned to the village.

When I said goodbye, I sensed Rahamon would die before I returned to the village.

When we arrived at the cemetery, Bashu carefully unlocked the wrought-iron gates in the stone wall. Inside the cemetery we walked single file along the narrow dirt path between the graves. Most of the graves were only recognizable by the way the dirt was unnaturally mounded under the green ground cover. A few graves had markers set up that looked like flat field stones someone had uncovered while plowing with their oxen.

We removed our sandals beside the path and walked over to the mound of earth that covered his son. We knelt side by side and sprinkled red, yel-

Continued on page 14

Continued from page 13

low, blue and white flowers on top of the mound. Tears flowed down both our cheeks. Bashu invited us to join in prayer again. Instead of waiting for me to pray, he cried out with an earnest prayer of his own. I did not understand the words, but I heard a prayer filled with all the emotion of father grieving the death of his only son. The only word I did understand was "Allah." Then he paused in silence and waited for me to offer my prayer. My words tumbled out, mingled with my tears and concluded as all my prayers do, "in the name of Jesus."

How could I tell him that in America many who share my religion believe that the word "Muslim" and the word "terrorist" are synonyms?

As we left the cemetery, we talked about Abraham and Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Arriving back at the tailor shop, Bashu took his place behind his sewing machine and invited me to sit on the stool opposite him. After more conversation, he asked me, "In America, are Muslims and Christians brothers?"

How could I tell him that in America many who share my religion believe that the word "Muslim" and the word "terrorist" are synonyms? I was grateful I could tell him that while on a recent domestic flight in the United States, I happened to sit beside a Muslim with whom I shared wonderful conversation. He had even invited me to visit the Mosque in our destination city—an invitation I was grateful my schedule allowed me to accept. But I also had to be honest with Bashu about the hostile attitudes that also existed.

Ever since Bashu's probing question I have listened to reports of world events and the rhetoric of both Christians and Muslims with different ears. Perhaps if we could drink tea in one another's homes, pray for the healing of one another's pain and suffering and weep together beside the graves of our children, more of us could discover what Bashu identified about us, we can live as brothers and sisters.

John C. Murray is pastor of Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

Welcoming the stranger

by Anna Groff

The work of Asylum Seekers Housing Network

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

Maria (not her real name), 51, who came to the United States from Guatemala in 2004, describes her life as a "long story."

Two weeks after she got married, her husband hit her for the first time, and this, she says, was only the beginning. From then on, he beat her and her two children. "One day he left me more dead than alive," she says.

The Guatemalan government would not intervene, so she fled to the United States. She arrived in Arizona, where the immigration officials threatened to send her back to Guatemala, but she pleaded and told them about her husband, so they sent her to Delaware. There she was referred to the Asylum Seekers Housing Network, a ministry of North Baltimore Mennonite Church.

Last December, Maria's asylum status was approved. But she is not receiving a government stipend yet because her paperwork is incomplete.

She hopes to bring her children—a 13-year-old daughter and 27-year-old son—since she hears that her husband is still a danger to them.

For now she must wait, with the support of the Network and Laura Helmuth, who works with the Network through Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS). Laura connected Maria to a Spanish-speaking Catholic church and English language classes. Maria said she is grateful for Laura's friendship and looks forward to their weekly visits.

Laura describes an "asylum seeker" as someone who has to leave their country immediately for political or domestic violence reasons, or who is living in the United States on a visa that expires and can't return to their country for various reasons. A refugee is granted status abroad and can come freely to the United States with rights.

For example, one asylum seeker at the Network was the son of a man considering running for president in Rwanda. The president at that time felt threatened, so he warned he might kill this man and his family. The son had to flee quickly.

People become asylum seekers as soon as they begin the process of applying for asylum, which usually takes six months. During this process, asylum seekers have no rights to work or attend school. Laura helps them find volunteer work and English courses, if necessary. Many shelters won't accept them because they do not have the asylum status and are not eligible for assistance.

If an asylum seeker is denied asylum status, he or she can appeal it in the courts and remain with the Network. However, the Network receives clients through nonprofits with lawyers who have screened the cases and vouch that they are strong cases, says Ruth Keidel Clemens, Network committee chair.

The Network, which receives clients through nonprofits in the D.C. area, works to provide for some of the spiritual needs of the clients. They ask asylum seekers what their faith practices are and if they want to be part of that faith community in Baltimore. If so, Laura helps them find a place of worship. The Network has hosted Muslim asylum seekers in past years.

Laura also provides them spiritual support on an individual basis, says Ruth.

The Network provides help such as a stipend, English classes and other life skills. Laura took one asylum seeker to the grocery store, assuming she could just drop him off. When they got there, he stood there and said, "I've never done this before." Laura gave him tips on how to shop and cook simple meals.

Laura has helped asylum seekers become familiar with a new culture and find activities to occupy their time. She has also offered emotional support, especially for those who have faced emotional trauma in their former countries.

The asylum seekers also "give back," says Ruth, by volunteering at places such as Ten Thousand Villages, World Relief and the University of Maryland's Medical Center.

Seven asylum seekers have gone through the program, which started with 15 refugees in 2004.

The Network provides housing for two asylum seekers at the Reservoir Hill House of Peace, and the other two through host families. The House of Peace, an old mansion owned by the Atlantic Coast Conference, used to be used to train Eastern Mennonite Missions' Youth Evangelism Teams.

Asylum seekers, the members of the MVS unit and residents live in the house. The residents, representing six nationalities, are studying or working in Baltimore and want to live in community with an international flavor.

The goals include simple living, communal living, involvement in an urban area and living as disciples of Jesus, but they are still working to "find out what this house should become," says Jonathan Keidel Clemens, House of Peace committee chair. Everyone in the International House gathers for a breakfast on Sunday morning.

North Baltimore Mennonite Church is located in a wealthier area of Baltimore, so the House of Peace house offers a way for church members to connect to a different part of the city, says Jonathan.

Ruth hopes the house will attract people to Baltimore for professional and community reasons. She wants young Mennonites to connect to this area and "stick around" long-term, she says.

To bring everyone together, the House of Peace started hosting international potlucks and sharing times last year. The evenings are designed for members from North Baltimore Mennonite to share food and talents with the asylum seekers and show support. It is a "gift-sharing" event where all people benefit from experiences of others' cultures, says Ruth.

At the fifth potluck in March, 28 people of all ages participated. During the sharing time, the group heard songs from Guatemala, Ghana and Zambia, learned a song from the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Lord's Prayer in German and sang together "Siya Hamba" in English, Portuguese, French and Spanish.

Anna Groff is assistant editor of The Mennonite.

Anna Groff

International potlucks: From left, Peter Tiesen, Donald Simata, Andrea Wilson and Laura Helmuth

Cape Christian Fellowship

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA

I will give You all my worship
I will give You all my praise
You alone I long to worship
You alone are worthy of my praise

Clockwise from lower left: Pastor Dennis Gingerich and teaching pastor Wes Furlong (right) baptize Rodrique Bertrand; a worship service; Sandra Restrepo and her daughter Ariana; administrative pastor Brett Furlong (center) presents a $32,796 check to Raul Hernandez of World Vision for building and staffing a medical clinic in Cape Christian's adopted community of Kapululwe, Zambia; the children's choir sings at a worship service.

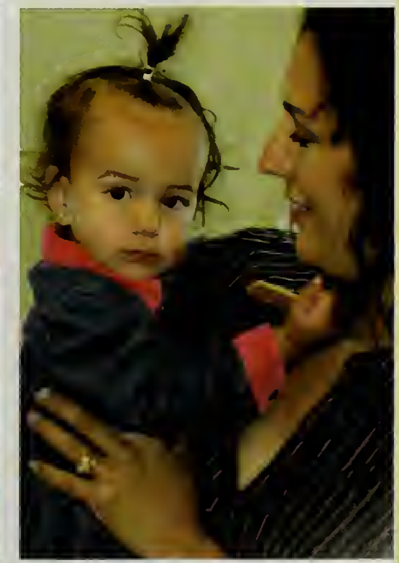
Cape Christian Fellowship (CCF) was born on April 19, 1987. In May 1986, through the support of the Mennonite Church, Dennis and Linda Gingerich teamed together with Tony and Ada Hostetler and Rod and Virginia Troyer (shown above, left to right) with the vision of beginning a church with a nondenominational flavor that would reach out to the unchurched people of Southwest Florida. The core group grew to 35 by the time the church launched on Easter Sunday, 1987. Attendance was 97 at the first worship celebration.

Between 1989 and 1999, the church purchased 48 residential building sites. Phase 1, a 17,000-square-foot multiuse facility, was completed at the end of 2000. We are in the final design of Phase 2, a building adding more children and youth space and office space. We will then be able to open a day care to serve the community and after-school programs for middle school students. Ground breaking on this 22,000-square-foot building will happen late this year and should be completed in late 2008.

CCF promotes three values for every person: peace (God, self and others), purpose (time, talent and treasure) and partnership (family, church and world). Our mission is "leading people to be fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ." We identify the four practices of a fully devoted follower of Jesus: participate in Christian community; partner in Jesus' mission; pursue peace in all relationships; and present time, talent and treasure generously. Average worship attendance is now over 1,100 each weekend. We have 19 staff members—11 full-time.

CCF is preparing to start a church planting initiative to begin at least 100 new churches. We expect the first new church to launch in 2008. CCF gives 20 percent to ministries outside the church and works with Habitat for Humanity and a local pregnancy center. We also support work in Haiti, Peru, Turkey, Afghanistan and Zambia, where we've helped dig two wells, provided a medical clinic and established a microeconomic loan program.—*Dennis Gingerich*

Fifth Third Bank 9143
$32,796.27
Health Care Center



A proposal to support the worldwide church

Wes Bergen is a member of New Creation Fellowship Church, Newton, Kan.

The Mennonite Church is expanding. It is a growing, vibrant gathering of Christians around the world. This growth is happening in a whole host of ways. Two of these forms of growth, however, are in conflict. Growth in one area hinders growth in another. Perhaps something can be done about this.

The first form of growth is in the numbers of Mennonites who are not in Europe or North America. The Mennonite churches in Africa and other parts of the world are adding members at a startling rate. Leadership training is not keeping up with church expansion. Money is not available to build churches, schools or programs.

The second form of growth is the continued construction of new buildings in North America. Churches regularly spend millions of dollars on new facilities. Conferences build office space, schools add or replace facilities.

What this means for the larger church is that money appears to be available to build new facilities in North America but is not available to fund new churches or schools outside North America. These two things are related because resources are limited. Money used for one purpose cannot be used for another.

The tension between the desire to improve facilities at home and the desire to support the worldwide church plays itself out on a regular basis. Sometimes it happens within congregations, where one group wants to build while another group wants to support missions. More often it plays itself out inside each of us, as we try to deal with conflicting needs and resources in our homes and churches.

One way out of this dilemma is by linking the two desires. Each congregation, conference and school could pass an amendment to their constitution whereby each dollar spent on facility construction or upgrade would be matched by a dollar sent to build the worldwide church. So if a church decides to spend $3 million on a new building, it also commits itself to send $3 million to fund a project elsewhere, such as the building of a seminary in Ethiopia. Or if we want to add office space for an expanding staff, an equivalent amount would be raised to build churches in Vietnam.

Of course, this amendment effectively doubles the cost of any building project. This has many additional benefits. It forces us to take stewardship more seriously. Rather than wondering if we have enough to meet our own needs, we recognize that God has provided much more than we need, so we can open our hearts and wallets to the needs of the world. This type of giving ties in directly to the notion of firstfruits giving, where we give to God our best rather than just what is left over after we provide for ourselves.

This proposal would connect the North American church with the church worldwide. I imagine it can be difficult to explain to Mennonites in Kenya that churches in North America build lavish new sanctuaries but give little to help their brothers and sisters overseas. Connecting our needs to the needs of Christians from another part of the world builds bridges between us and them. If we connect our congregations to specific people and projects, the fellowship of prayer and sharing of needs builds both groups.

It relieves the tension between home missions and overseas missions. So long as these two missions are separate lines in our budgets, they are in competition for limited resources. We can change that by linking them, forcing ourselves to think of them together. Mission is mission. We can extend the mission of our home congregations even as we show that we love others as much as we love ourselves.

It forces us to confront our wealth, when we see how many churches can be built in Africa for the cost of a new gym in North America. While we do have some economic disparity in our congregations, it pales in comparison with the disparity between the North American church and the worldwide church. We have so much to learn from our brothers and sisters from overseas (and from the poor among us).

The list goes on and on. Really there is no downside to this idea. It might even cut back on the number of football stadiums built by Mennonite schools. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Why Civilian Public Service is important**—Ted Grimsrud
- **The education and witness of a peace and justice lover**—Melodie M. Davis

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Divine coincidence for church leaders

Illinois congregation meets antiracism goal with interracial pastoral team.

At Community Mennonite Church, Markham, Ill., worshipers with various skin tones sit side by side. But since pastor Horace McMillon was called to Mississippi in 2005, the church's paid leaders have been white-only, and everyone in the congregation agreed that needed to change.

Pastors Bonnie and Chuck Neufeld have had various positions of leadership at Community Mennonite on and off for more than 30 years; they have served as pastors for the past 11 years. They said God's call was clear: The church's resolve to be an interracial, antiracist community could only be achieved if the pastoral team reflected the rest of the congregation.

More than 100 miles away and several years ago, Cyneatha Millsaps began attending Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind. A member of Agape Missionary Baptist Church in Elkhart, Millsaps assumed her degree would aid her social service work.

But today, she and Steve, her husband, stand ready to make the Markham pastoral team whole.

Community Mennonite has a long history of multiculturalism. When the once-white community of Markham began integrating in the 1960s, the church chose to open its doors to everyone, regardless of race. The decision cost the congregation nearly half its members, but members gained the conviction that all their power structures and processes must reflect congregational demographics.

After McMillon left, the Markham community began praying for God to send them another pastor, but there was a catch. Both Neufelds are half-time. The new pastor would likely also be half-time, and the cost of living in Markham, a village on the south side of Chicago, can be prohibitive for a part-timer. Still, the congregation prayed.

In September 2006, AMBS campus pastor Janeen Bertsche Johnson attended a Camp Friedenswald women's retreat. She sat with a group of women from Markham and learned of the church's longing for an African-American part-time pastor. Millsaps immediately came to mind.

Millsaps had not thought much about becoming a pastor. She was committed to her job as president/CEO of Family Services of Elkhart County. But when Bertsche Johnson asked her about her interest in pastoring, Millsaps said it would be possible, but only if she could work part-time and continue in social services. Bertsche Johnson felt the Spirit move, but the biggest jolt was yet to come.

Cyneatha says her husband, Steve, was looking to leave Elkhart. But he felt called to serve with youth and was working at a local middle school. They did not know where they would find a place that would allow both of them to follow their calls from God. Bertsche Johnson returned to her office and emailed the Neufelds.

Ryan Miller

Clockwise from left: Cyneatha Millsaps, Bonnie Neufeld, Steve Millsaps and Chuck Neufeld pray together at the Neufelds' Markham, Ill., home.

A few weeks later, the Millsapses met the Neufelds. What was planned as a short conversation lasted three hours.

Soon afterward, the Millsapses visited Community Mennonite, not knowing what to expect. They left, the Millsapses say, longing for Markham. And the longing was mutual. By February, the congregation unanimously chose to commission Cyneatha as interim minister on a six-month trial basis and Steve as a lay leader with the youth ministry.

The congregation did not need the full-time trial to sense God's leading. By early May, the congregational board was preparing to invite the Millsapses to join the congregation permanently.

The board now intends to work out the remaining details so that a recommendation regarding Cyneatha's ongoing pastoral ministry can be presented for official action at the annual congregational meeting in June.

There are still details to be finalized and finances to raise (the Neufelds insist that Millsaps' salaries be equal to theirs regardless of suggested pastoral guidelines), but the two pastoral couples are adamant that they will see through what God has put in motion.

"It's amazing to go and see young and old, the haves and have-nots, whites and blacks, and they love each other there," Cyneatha says. "You can feel it, and it's nothing phony, nothing fake. They think we're blessing them. It's the other way around."—*Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network*

Correction: Credit for the Mennonite World Conference story "Täuferjahr Opens in Switzerland" (May 1) should have been given to swissinfo, the international arm of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation, in addition to reporter Dale Bechtel. MWC regrets this error.

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

1,304 graduate from Mennonite Church USA universities, colleges, seminaries

Vada Snider/Bethel College

Bethel College faculty members line the steps of Memorial Hall as seniors proceed into the auditorium for the school's 114th commencement ceremony on May 20.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

May 19

39 graduates

The 39 graduates of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., were asked to hear God's call as an ongoing call—bigger than what they might do for a paycheck.

April Yamasaki, pastor of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C., addressed the graduates at the May 19 commencement service at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. Sharing the experience of her own unexpected call to congregational ministry, Yamasaki told graduates, "God's call is more than a noun, an event to look back on. God's call is a verb, a movement, a direction. What sustains me is not that God called me 14 years ago but that God is continuing to call me even today."

In response to the charge to the graduates, given by Alan Kreider, associate professor of church history and mission, the graduates sang a new hymn text written for the occasion by graduate Adam Tice. Joining in on the third verse, the congregation sang, "Be our living guide; let your Spirit be our strength and song; with the gifts that you provide, lead where we belong."

The 2007 graduates of AMBS came from four countries—including two from Kenya and one from Indonesia—in addition to eight from Canada and 28 from the United States. Nineteen received the Master of Divinity degree, three the Master of Arts: Peace Studies, eight the Master of Arts: Theological Studies, seven the Master of Arts in Christian Formation and two the Certificate in Theological Studies. The class included a brother and sister, Rachel and Ryan Siemens, and two married couples, Charleen and Kendall Jongejan Harder and Juanita Laverty and David Sararus, all from Canada.

Thirteen graduates already have pastoral ministry assignments that they are continuing or beginning, and nine more are seeking congregational pastoral ministry placements. Other future plans include mission work, spiritual direction, clinical social work, further graduate study, Bible teaching and writing, advocacy work for people with disabilities, and work with Church World Service.—*Mary E. Klassen*

Bethel College

May 20

121 graduates

Commencement at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., traditionally places high emphasis on family. As in the past several years, members of each graduate's family were invited to stand and be recognized when he or she walked across the Memorial Hall stage to receive the diploma on May 20. Another long-standing tradition is that of having parents of graduating seniors offer the opening and closing prayers for the commencement ceremony. Vern Rempel, pastor of First Mennonite Church in Denver, gave the invocation. His son, Jess, graduated with a degree in art. Jelena Maksimovic came all the way from Belgrade, Serbia, to offer the benediction and watch her son, Djordje Maricic, earn degrees in communication studies and German.

This year, the "family affair" extended into the class of 2007 in the form of four faculty/staff-child pairs: Paul Lewis, professor of psychology, and his daughter Emma; Jon Piper, professor of biology, and his son Josh; Chuck Regier, curator of exhibits at Kauffman Museum, and his son Abe; and Ada Schmidt-Tieszen, professor of social work, and her daughter Tina. Emma and Tina are following in parental footsteps so far, earning de-

Thirteen Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary graduates already have pastoral ministry assignments; nine more seek congregational placement.

grees in psychology and social work, respectively.

Commencement speaker E. LaVerne Epp, Lawrence, Kan., Bethel's president from 2002-05, gave an intimate address in which he recalled some of his favorite moments with the class of 2007, including a "trick-or-treat in reverse" Halloween prank and regular pizza nights in one of the mods.

He also spoke on what was a favorite theme during his presidency, the importance of curiosity and the power of imagination.

As vice president for academic affairs Brad Born introduced the class of 2007 in preparation for the march across the Mem Hall stage, he noted that 66 were women and 55 men. The oldest was 54 and the two youngest 20. They came from 15 U.S. states as well as Ethiopia, Jamaica, Kenya and Serbia. Eighty-five were from Kansas.—*Melanie Zuercher*

Bluffton University
May 6
302 graduates

Warm weather and cheerful faces welcomed Bluffton (Ohio) University students, alumni and friends to the institution's annual May Day and commencement festivities, May 4-6, continuing the 97-year-old tradition and concluding the academic year with the 107th commencement ceremony. Bluffton's 2007 graduating class included 302—its second largest to receive diplomas.

President James M. Harder and commencement speaker Edward Diller paid tribute to the 2007 baseball team for its extraordinary courage and poise in the midst of tragedy. The parents of senior Tim Berta were on hand to represent their son and received a lengthy standing ovation from the crowd. Berta, a student-coach for the Bluffton University baseball team, remains hospitalized after the March 2 bus accident.

During his address, Diller spoke specifically to those graduating, assuring them that they have been well prepared by Bluffton University to walk into their futures.

"With the strong foundation that has been nurtured within you at this university, you have the confidence to stretch yourselves and the confidence to move through the anxiety caused by self-doubt, beyond the fear of failure and past the paralyzing grip of hopelessness," he said. "In doing that, and in knowing that your ultimate calling is to play your role, however humble or however grand, in God's universal kingdom, you will be free to use the gifts that God has given you, with power and with strength, in ways that will give meaning to your life, ways that will serve those around you and most certainly in ways that are now beyond your comprehension."

Prior to commencement, graduating seniors and their families gathered for a baccalaureate service, which featured speeches by two graduating students, Hannah Kehr and Jacob Slager, as well as Perry Bush, professor of history and chair of the history and religion department. All speakers were chosen by the graduating class.

On May 5, graduates, alumni and friends took in the annual Maypole dance that has been part of Bluffton's graduation weekend since 1910. Sixteen first-year students, wearing Germanic costumes, danced in pairs around the pole, weaving streamers together. The dance is symbolic of the weaving together of past, present and future; memories of the past, appreciation of the present and hope for the future are woven around the Maypole in a never-ending circle. A senior queen and king, elected by students, presided over the event, which recognized all graduating seniors. This year's king and queen were Matthew Keeler and his wife, Katie (Nussbaum) Keeler.—*Robin Bowlus*

God's call is more than a noun, an event to look back on. God's call is a verb, a movement, a direction.
—April Yamasaki, AMBS commencement speaker

Courtesy photo

Ed Diller, from Cincinnati, was the commencement speaker during Bluffton (Ohio) University's commencement activities May 4-6. Diller has also been nominated to become the next moderator-elect for Mennonite Church USA.

Commencement coverage continues on page 22.

Mother receives posthumous degree for Eastern Mennonite University student

Commencement coverage continued from page 21.

Eastern Mennonite Seminary
April 28
26 graduates

When Yumiko Nakashima came to the United States five years ago, she didn't plan to attend seminary. She came so her husband, Mitsunari, could study at Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS) in Harrisonsburg, Va. He graduated in 2006, and this year Yumiko walked across the stage as well.

EMS held its 58th annual commencement on April 28. Yumiko joined 25 classmates who received degrees or certificates from EMS. The first two years Yumiko was in the United States she stayed home with their 2-year old son while Mitsunari studied at the seminary and in the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at EMU.

"I was burnt out from being a pastor in Japan," said Yumiko. "I was so tired and I needed to rest. I was sick, mentally, spiritually and physically."

During that first year someone suggested that Yumiko get spiritual direction through the seminary, but she was afraid because her English was not very good. After two years, she relented.

"I needed to talk to someone and work to restore my relationship with God," she said. "Spiritual direction was so good. The patient listening and gentle direction was treatment for my soul."

She began to see how spiritual direction could help other Japanese women pastors she knew. Many friends and former pastors she knew in Japan faced similar struggles. Yumiko's experiences and her knowledge of the struggles of Japanese women pastors led her to study at EMS. She graduated with a Master of Divinity degree with concentration in spiritual direction and pastoral care and counseling. Yumiko also won an award for excellence in pastoral care for her work at EMS. She hopes to return to Japan someday to help pastors in the way she's been helped here. For now, she and Mitsunari are moving to a Japanese community in California to pastor North County Church, a church in the Oriental Mission Society Holiness denomination.—*Jim Bishop*

> **At college, we often believe we can think our way into a new way of living. In reality, it's more likely that we will live our way into a new way of thinking.**—Joy Carroll Wallis, Goshen College commencement speaker

Eastern Mennonite University
April 29
403 graduates

Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., awarded a posthumous degree to the late Thomas P. Bowers of Harrisonburg during the school's 89th commencement held April 29 on the front lawn of campus. Bowers' mother, Deborah Bowers, accepted the degree in economics with minors in accounting and history given in her son's memory (see photo on page 23). The audience of more than 3,600 gave a standing ovation.

Bowers came to EMU in the fall of 2003 on a presidential scholarship after graduating with honors from Harrisonburg High School. Although confined to a wheelchair due to Duchennes muscular dystrophy, Bowers was active in his classes, raised campus awareness on accessibility issues and lived each day to the fullest. He died of complications from his illness on Feb. 14 at Rockingham Memorial Hospital.

EMU President Loren E. Swartzendruber conferred 403 degrees—302 undergraduate, 87 graduate, three associate degrees and 11 graduate certificates—on members of the graduating class of 2007. Lee F. Snyder, president emeritus of Bluffton (Ohio) University, gave the commencement address, using the metaphor of "a road or a path" in urging the graduates to spend some time examining themselves as they embark on their next stage of life.

"We've been sobered in the past weeks by trauma and tragedy—the inexplicable violence that a sister Virginia university has been dealing with," Snyder said. "We cry out for answers and are reminded that life is indescribably precious and each day is a gift. What we do know is that God has ordained a place and purpose for each of you."—*Jim Bishop*

Larry Bartel

Abby Miller of Elkhart, Ind., receives her diploma from Hesston (Kan.) College president Howard Keim. Miller and her 169 classmates graduated May 6.

Hesston College commencement speakers respond to 'Start Here, Go Everywhere' motto with call to 'avoid business as usual like the plague.'

Goshen College
April 29
243 graduates

Years of hard work, study, sacrifice and prayer culminated April 29 when members of the class of 2007 received degrees after hearing inspirational messages from Goshen (Ind.) College president James E. Brenneman and Joy Carroll Wallis, one of the first women to be ordained as an Anglican priest in England.

The class of 2007 consisted of 243 graduates—164 of them candidates for Bachelor of Arts degrees and 79 candidates for Bachelor of Science degrees. The class included 22 graduates with double majors and one—Rachel E. Sprunger of Scottdale, Pa.—who earned a triple major.

The afternoon commencement ceremony processional was led by 125 current and retired faculty members. After an invocation and a congregational hymn, the seniors were encouraged by Wallis to embrace joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith—and to avoid such negative emotions and feelings as anger, envy, greed, arrogance, self-pity, lies and, especially, fear.

"Just because you are all set with this fabulous educational and spiritual experience here at Goshen, it doesn't mean it's easy or plain sailing from here on in," Wallis said. "At college, we often believe we can think our way into a new way of living. But that's actually not the way it works. In reality, it's more likely that we will live our way into a new way of thinking."—*Richard R. Aguirre*

Jodi H. Beyeler

Goshen College nursing majors Shihoko Kanemoto (Japan) and Esi Cudjoe (Ghana) celebrate together on April 29 following the college's 109th commencement ceremony.

Hesston College
May 6
170 graduates

A student with many shoes and a shoeless pastor were both speakers at the Hesston (Kan.) College commencement service May 6. While Patrick Harrison, one of the student speakers, used three shoes from his collection to illustrate what his Hesston experience meant to him, John Murray spoke in stocking feet to the 170 graduates, plus faculty, staff, family and friends. Murray, pastor at Hesston Mennonite Church and member of the board of directors of Menno Clinic India, explained that people don't wear shoes in worship services in India as an expression that they are on holy ground.

Alicia Hertzler, one of the first six students to graduate from the Disaster Management Program, was the other student speaker. Referring to Hesston's motto, "Start Here, Go Everywhere," Hertzler asked, "So what on earth is it that we acquire at this college that enables us to go everywhere after graduating from this institution?"

Murray's address gave listeners of all ages direction on how to approach that question in their lives. "Whatever age you are, I invite all of you to ask yourself that question again this morning and listen to the answer that Jesus gives," Murray said. "The first answer Jesus gives is, 'Avoid business as usual like the plague.' Avoid going back to the routine of life … take a risk. … Try it even if you don't think you can do it. Try it even if somebody says it's impossible. Step outside the normal way of doing things."

Hesston's ceremonies also included four graduates in the Pastoral Ministries program; they were commissioned with prayer stoles from members of the Bible and ministry faculty.—*Phil Richard*

Eastern Mennonite University's president Loren Swartzendruber embraces Deborah Bowers after presenting a posthumous degree in memory of her son Thomas P. Bowers. Thomas, who had MD, was an honors student who enrolled at EMU the fall of 2003 and died in February.

Some Mennonites join Emergent Village

Philadelphia gathering lets congregations put old structures, traditions to rest.

When participants gathered in suburban Philadelphia in April for the 2007 Emergent Conversation, they were surprised at how many Mennonites were in the group. For Jess Walter, who works with Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Conference, the reason was obvious: A combination of her job, a personal interest in postmodernity and faith, and a desire to show hospitality motivated her to join the event.

Emergent Village is definitely not a denomination but rather focuses … on connecting those interested in the emerging church.
—Tony Jones

"I told them," said Walter, who helped coordinate the gathering, "You were on our turf!" Most of Franconia Conference's 41 congregations are located in the Philadelphia region.

Nearly 150 people joined the conversation held April 16-18 on the campus of Eastern University, near Philadelphia, and at a nearby church. Coordinated by Emergent Village, it's referred to as a "conversation" instead of a conference as a way to set an informal tone and invite participation.

Emergent Village is about 10 years old and best characterized, according to national coordinator Tony Jones, as a relational network of friends. Emergent Village is definitely not a denomination, says Jones, but rather focuses its work on connecting those interested in the emerging church and organizing conferences and publishing books.

Some of the Mennonites present at the gathering, such as Tim Stair, were there as official representatives of both their area conferences and of Mennonite Church USA. Others, such as Mark Van Steenwyk of Minneapolis, came representing emerging Mennonite congregations.

Van Steenwyk's church, Missio Dei, began nearly 2½ years ago in the West Bank neighborhood of Minneapolis, an ethnically-diverse area with a high level of poverty. A year after the church began, members began to explore how they could be more hospitable and present in their community. They also wanted to join a larger Anabaptist community and approached the Central Plains Conference about joining Mennonite Church USA.

"We are very Anabaptist at Missio Dei," says Van Steenwyk. "We feel that we need to submit to some larger community so that we don't get it into our heads that we're doing this alone or that we can simply pick and choose what we want to do as a group of 'consumers.'"

Topher Maddox, who works at Spruce Lake Retreat in Canadensis, Pa., had a similar experience. His congregation, NewStart, grew out of what was Spruce Lake Fellowship. Within the last few years, though, as the area around Spruce Lake and the Poconos began to change rapidly, church members recognized the need to move into the community.

"We felt the old structure and some of the traditions [of our church] needed to be put to rest in order to make a new, fresh start," says Maddox.

For others it was their first exposure to the emerging church movement.

"It's important for Mennonites to be in conversation [about] what it means to be Mennonite and Christian in our world today," says Hinke Loewen-Rudgers, who works with Mennonite Church Canada. "It's only in conversation and engagement with others that our own faith journey really makes a difference to the local and global community."

"If we are going to be missional Christians, our churches are going to be constantly emerging, constantly in the process of new formation and rethinking," Walter says. She hopes that building relationships with others who are Anabaptist-oriented might help the Mennonite church learn more about itself.

Stair found that much of the theology he heard, such as an emphasis on love of enemy as central to the gospel, is closely aligned with Anabaptist theology. Stair says he came partly because of his commitments to the denomination but also because of personal interest.

"I think we're living in a time where we need to find some different ways to be church," he says.

While the theme of this year's conversation was philosophy and theology, the event gave participants an opportunity to network and explore what they've learned in their own churches.—*Lora Steiner for Franconia Mennonite Conference*

Systems Developer

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) has an opening for a systems developer to design, develop, and implement information systems in an IBM iSeries Plex, RPG, Web, and PC LAN environment. Qualified applicants will have a bachelor's degree or equivalent experience in applied or analytical science; experience with/ability to learn programming languages, systems analysis, design, and project management; strong interpersonal and communication skills.

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CALENDAR

CrossRoads (Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center, Va.) is sponsoring its annual ***Tears and Ashes bus tour*** on Sat., July 21. For more information call 540-438-1275 before July 16.

San José 2007. ***Mennonite Church USA assembly and youth convention***, San José, Calif.

WORKERS

Albright, Thomas, was licensed for specific ministry at Whitehall Mennonite Church, Whitehall, Pa., on March 28.

Ford, Michael, was licensed and installed as senior high youth pastor at Franconia Mennonite Church, Franconia, Pa., on April 29.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Alderfer, Seth Aaron, May 12, to Andrew and Laura Leatherman Alderfer, Telford, Pa.

Barber, Sophia Marie, April 27, to Troy and Jody Cripe Barber, Elkhart, Ind.

Bender, Mason David, April 17, to Stephen and Samantha Sailor Bender, Iowa City, Iowa.

Bogle, Noah James, April 30, to Mike Bogle and Celesti Buller, Windom, Minn.

Bontrager, Erin Annette, March 25, to Billy and Cindy Bollar Bontrager, Iowa City, Iowa.

Carlson, Mara Kathryn, May 3, to Matthew and Monica Hochstedler Carlson, Harrisonburg, Va.

Carroll, Jackson David, May 1, to David and Rebecca Carroll, Toledo, Ohio.

Dayton, McKenna Nichole, May 2, to Jeremy and Andrea Gahman Dayton, Harrisonburg, Va.

Eby, Landon Isaiah, Feb. 8, to Brett and Jennifer Rainwater Eby, Leola, Pa.

Fairfield, Thomas Makepeace Harnish, May 1, to Nathaniel and Miriam Stauffer Fairfield, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Francis, Tristan Liam, May 4, to Russ and Sharleen Loewen Francis, Goessel, Kan.

Friesen, Madelyn Joye, April 20, to Mark and Stephanie Loeppky Friesen, Altona. Man.

Gascho, Preston Cade, April 6, to Chad and Tera King Gascho, Goshen, Ind.

Gouldey, Zareck Elijah, May 1, to Michael and Kalyn Gerber Gouldey, Souderton, Pa.

Jha, Anusha, April 27, to Anuraj and Jill Landis Jha, Harrisonburg, Va.

King, Campbell Meg, March 5, to Mathew and Melisa Buckwalter King, Christiana, Pa.

Karwiec, Amanda Justine Paige, April 23, to Alex Karwiec and Alisa Miller, Goshen, Ind.

Miller, Abigail Sue, April 23, to Ben and Monica Wiebe Miller, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Rempel, Benjamin David, May 5, to Andrew and Stephanie Rempel, Altona, Man.

Riegsecker, Morgan Nicole, April 11, to Ryan and Jodi Riegsecker, Goshen, Ind.

Riley, Jay Christopher, April 27, to Jaycee and Buffy Wyse Riley, Archbold, Ohio.

Rinner, Camron Tye, April 19, to Tye and Dian Stille Rinner, Wayland, Iowa.

Ripperger, Elizabeth Joyce, April 25, to Rob Ripperger and Rebekah Stutzman, Washington D.C.

Rittenhouse, Olivia Eden, April 20, to Matthew and Emily Martin Rittenhouse, Doylestown, Pa.

Ruth, Mykaela Anna, April 28, to Sidney and Kristi Coulson Ruth, Telford, Pa.

Schmidt, Liam Orlando, Feb. 22, to Patrick and Dora Good Schmidt, Enkenbach, Germany.

Short, Emma Elizabeth, March 31, to Joel and Karen Zeiset Short, Smithville, Ohio.

Steinbruegger, Leanne, April 8, to Helen and Reinhard Steinbruegger, of Altona, Man.

Tyree, Benjamin Joseph, Feb. 26, to Bob and Sheryl Tyree, Dalton, Ohio.

Willett, Anya Noelle, May 12, to Kenneth and Heather Schneider Willett, Louisville, Ohio.

Woodhouse, Dalen Jacob, April 25, to Brent and Karen Keefer Woodhouse, Farmingdale, N.Y.

MARRIAGES

Armstrong/Moyer: Sarah Armstrong, Clearwater, Kan., and Nathan Moyer, Deer Creek, Okla., April 28, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Fortuna, Mo.

Bender/Plank: Christopher Bender, Kalona, Iowa, and Allyce Plank, Kalona, May 12, at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Book/Gimmel: Tiffany Book, Leola, Pa., and Gregor G. Gimmel, Bassersdorf, Switzerland, April 14, at Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola.

Braun/Hildebrandt: Shelley Braun, Altona, Man., and Aaron Hildebrandt, Altona, May 12, at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Lehman/Ray: Morgan Lehman, Orrville, Ohio, and Casey Ray, New Philadelphia, Ohio, April 14, at Kidron Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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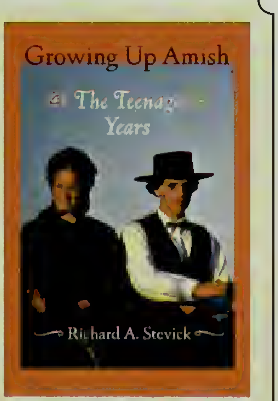

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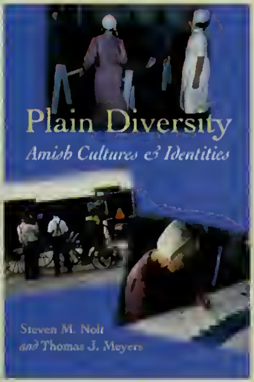

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Martin/Miller: Cheryl Martin, Iowa City, Iowa, and Wendell Miller, Iowa City, May 5, at Danforth Chapel, Iowa City.

Miller/Yoder: Michelle Miller, Kalona, Iowa, and Gentry Yoder, Kalona, April 21, at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Mullet/Schrock: Scott Mullet, Sarasota, Fla., and Jena Schrock, Sarasota, March 24, at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Rempel/Suarez: Jackson Rempel, Altona, Man., and Liliana Suarez, May 5, in Cuauhtemoc, Mexico.

DEATHS

Baumgartner, Elvera Merry Miller, 82, Castorland, N.Y., died May 10. Spouse: Nelson Baumgartner (deceased). Spouse: Stanley Merry (deceased). Parents: Leon and Ethel Austin Miller. Children: Linda Seitz, Kay Monnat, Pam Salaway, Brandt; 10 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 15 at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville, N.Y.

Beyer, Mark W., 74, Kinzers, Pa., died April 26. Spouse: Mildred Hershey Beyer. Parents: Russel and Mary Wissler Beyer. Children: John, Jay, Jerry; six grandchildren. Funeral: April 30 at Hershey Mennonite Church, Kinzers.

Boshart, Clayton, 96, Lowville, N.Y., died May 10. Spouse: Florence Bast Boshart (deceased). Parents: Eli and Katie Kennel Boshart. Children: Harold, Gerald, Richard, Clifford, Shirley Widrick; 17 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 12 at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville.

Derstine, Marvin G., 89, Souderton, Pa., died March 20. Spouse: Pauline G. Moyer Derstine. Parents: Herbert A. and Lillian Godshall Derstine. Children: Patricia A. Halteman, Paul M., Roy M., Dale M. Betty L. Kulp, Nancy R. Moyer; 17 grandchildren; 40 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 24 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Dintaman, Carl E., 91, LaGrange, Ind., died April 26. Spouse: Salina Christner Dintaman (deceased). Parents: George and Edna Pearl Yoder Dintaman. Children: Phyllis Stutzman, Carol Birky, Pamela Dintaman, Phil, Carl P., Stephen; 14 grandchildren; 9 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 2 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Eberly, Norman N., 90, New Holland, Pa., died May 8. Spouse: Ruth M. Landis Eberly (deceased). Parents: Amos and Mary Nolt Eberly. Children: Paul, Glenn, Marian Eisenberger, Joyce Nolt, Darlene Lapp, Karen Frank, Thelma Eberly; 15 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 12 at Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Eshleman, Lee Edward, 43, Harrisonburg, Va., died unexpectedly May 17. Spouse: Reagan Boshart Eshleman. Parents: J. Robert and Rosalie Hartman Eshleman. Children: Nicholas Alan Boshart, Sarah Eileen Boshart, Gabriel Robert Eshleman. Funeral: May 21 at Eastern Mennonite University Lehman Auditorium, Harrisonburg.

Fulmer, Kathryn Hunsberger, 84, Sellersville, Pa., died April 21. Spouse: Marvin D. Fulmer (deceased). Parents: Earl and Estelle Detweiler Hunsberger. Children: Rose Allebach, Richard; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: April 24 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Grove, Florence Stombaugh, 91, Archbold, Ohio, died April 19. Spouse: Kedric Grove (deceased). Parents: Leo and Ada Good Stombaugh. Children: Dr. Deam, Milan, Myrna Grove; four grandchildren. Funeral: April 28 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Guth, Ronald Arthur, 82, Flanagan, Ill., died April 20 following a long struggle with cancer. Parents: Arthur and Erma Yordy Guth. Funeral: April 23 at Prairieview Mennonite Church, Flanagan.

Headings, Mary Helen, 92, West Liberty, Ohio, died April 30. Parents: Frank and Lydia Hilty Headings. Funeral: May 4 at South Union Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Herschberger, Barbara M. Schrock, 86, Arthur, Ill., died May 2. Spouse: Joas A. Herschberger. Parents: Menno and Lydia Gingerich Schrock. Children: Menno, Lovina Jess, Willmer, Alvin, Dena Schrock, Irene Herschberger, Ella Yoder; 40 grandchildren; 60 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 5 at the Joas Herschberger residence, Arthur.

Hershberger, Clyde, 94, Kalona, Iowa, died April 26. Spouse: Ollie Brenneman Hershberger. Parents: Ammon and Lydia Gascho Hershberger. Children: Cecil, Elaine Cole, Bea Knepp, Herb, Linda Cole, Larry; 23 grandchildren; 40 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 30 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Hershberger, Olen, 80, Louisville, Ohio, died May 12. Parents: David and Ida Crilow Hershberger. Funeral: May 16 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

Janzen, Herman Jacob, 73, Newton, Kan., died April 20. Spouse: Shirley Reed Janzen. Spouse: Ruth Claassen Janzen (deceased). Parents: John P. and Helene Claassen Janzen. Children: Bruce Janzen, Susan Janzen, Lisa Janzen Scott, Russell. Stepchildren: Paoul Claycamp, Cathy Ketterman, Marsha Geyer; seven grandchildren; eight step-grandchildren; eight step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 24 at Zion Mennonite Church, Elbing, Kan.

Kaufman, Adeline Boese, 104, Marion, S.D., died May 12. Spouse: Harry Kaufman (deceased). Parents: Abraham and Helena Buller Boese. Children: Lorraine Ortman, Maynard, Alice Suderman, Anette Eisenbeis, S. Roy; 25 grandchildren; 53 great-grandchildren; 18 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 15 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Martin, Robert E., 73, Leola, Pa., died May 1. Spouse: Janet G. Martin. Parents: Mahlon W. and Elsie V. Harnish Martin. Children: Michael, Jeffrey, Kathy Frey, Janae Smiley; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: May 7 at Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola.

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Martin, Venerva Burkhart, 86, Kitchener, Ont., died March 14. Spouse: David F. Martin (deceased). Parents: Simeon and Mary Ann Bauman Burkhart. Children: Margaret Legate, Gerald, Doris Herbison, Keli Martin, Roy; eight grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 17 at Floradale Mennonite Church, Floradale, Ont.

Miller, John Wertz, 84, Kalona, Iowa, died March 28 following a long illness. Spouse: Arlene Hochstetler Miller. Parents: Urie and Amanda Wertz Miller. Children: Jane Gingerich, Julie Derstine; four grandchildren. Funeral: April 2 at Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Pankratz, F. Carl, 88, Reedley, Calif., died May 1S following a short illness. Spouse: Mildred Pankratz. Parents: Abraham and Elizabeth Pankratz. Children: Sheila Bonds, Sharon Perez, Mark, Eric; nine grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 18 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Pletcher, Ralph, 88, Goshen, Ind., died March 30. Spouse: Jennie Kauffman Pletcher (deceased). Parents: Amasa and Maude Hershberger Pletcher. Children: Lawrence, Alma Jean Pletcher, Kenneth; three grandchildren. Funeral: April 3 at Clinton Brick Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Preheim, Loren, 66, Lancaster, Pa., died Feb. 14. Spouse: Rosalia Preheim. Parents: Edward J. and Alma Ortman Preheim. Children: Loren Misha, Christopher. Funeral: May 5 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Schloneger, John A., 90, Louisville, Ohio, died May 1 of cancer. Spouse: Amy Schloneger. Parents: Amos and Amanda Sommers Schloneger. Children: Norma Erb, Gerald, Loyal, Wesley, Rodney, Charlene Parrish; 28 grandchildren; 41 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 5 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

Shantz, Bertha "Bert" L. Bixler, 79, Elkhart, Ind., died May 14 of complications from a stroke. Spouse: Roy Shantz (deceased). Parents: Fred and Martha Bixler. Children: Mike, Rob, Caralee Smith, Peg Owen; four grandchildren. Funeral: May 18 at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Showalter, Ida Ruth, 87, Broadway, Va., died May 11. Parents: Timothy and Susie Shipe Showalter. Funeral: May 13 at Zion Mennonite Church, Broadway.

Shrom, Grace E. Garrett, 89, Christiana, Pa., died March 28. Spouse: Leonard Shrom (deceased). Parents: William and Edna Heinrich Province. Children: Susan J. French, Bette A. Bateman, Paul F.; 10 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 4 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Akron, Pa.

Souder, Grace B. Detwiler, 88, Sellersville, Pa., died Feb. 13. Spouse: Paul F. Souder. Parents: Elmer and Addie Baum Detwiler. Children: P. Don, Grace Marie Gerber, Feryl K., eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17 at Rockhill Mennonite Community, Sellersville.

Swartzendruber, Glen, 90, Pigeon, Mich., died May 2. Spouse: Erma Swartzendruber. Parents: George and Naomi Swartzendruber. Children: Lowell, Clarence; six grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 5 at Pigeon River Mennonite Church, Pigeon.

Toews, Wilma Frieda, 94, North Newton, Kan., died May 21. Parents: Henry F. and Agnes Toews. Funeral: May 25 at Historic Mennonite Brethren Church, Hillsboro, Kan.

Tyson, Paul K., 80, Souderton, Pa., died May 7. Spouse: Beatrice D. Tyson. Parents: Harry and Mae Kulp Tyson. Children: Gary, Randy, Jeffrey; five grandchildren; one great grandchild. Funeral: May 12 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford, Pa.

Weaver, Orpha Ellen Miller, 82, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died May 6. Spouse: Marion C. Weaver (deceased). Parents: Alvin and Ida Beechy Miller. Children: Bob, Jim, Bill, Max; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: May 9 at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church.

Wiebe, Helen, 88, Altona, Man., died April 23. Spouse: George P. Wiebe (deceased). Parents: Gerhard G. and Maria Falk. Children: George, Peter, Larry, Linda Lutz; nine grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: April 27 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Willems, Delores Nikkel, 76, Moundridge, Kan., died May 11. Spouse: James Willems (deceased). Parents: Henry H. and Inez Hiebert Nikkel. Children: Patricia Dalke, Thomas, Karen Behrendt; five grandchildren. Funeral: May 15 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Yoder, Esther Hostetler Birkbeck, 99, Orrville, Ohio, died May 9. Spouse: Tom Yoder (deceased). Spouse: Ward Birkbeck (deceased). Parents: Jonathan K. and Melinda Smucker Hostetler. Step-children: Lawrence Birkbeck, Robert Birkbeck, Harold Yoder, Ray Yoder, Mildred Myhre, Jan Detweiler, Linda Yoder; 14 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren; seven great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 12 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio.

Yoder, Lester David, 90, Kalona, Iowa, died April 23 of complications following a fall. Spouse: Pauline Miller Yoder. Parents: Jonas and Amelia Yoder Yoder. Children: Loran, Joyce Yoder, Shirley Yoder Bell, Damon; seven grandchildren. Funeral: April 28 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Yoder, Pamela Nyce, 42, Columbia, Pa., died May 3 of lung cancer. Spouse: Rodney L. Yoder. Parents: Donald J. and Faye Hochstetler Nyce. Children: Trentin J., Bryce D. Funeral: May 7 at Landisville, Pa.

"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

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Mennonite Mission Network seeks to identify Mennonite Church USA congregations or clusters of congregations who might consider ongoing partnership relationships. (1) Mennonite Church of Colombia's newly formed Caribbean Coast region has an active church planting vision and welcomes a mutual encouragement and gifts-sharing relationship that could generate additional resources to help accomplish this vision. (2) The Argentine Chaco Mennonite Team welcomes ministry partners and supporting congregations desiring to learn from indigenous churches while financially supporting Bible translation and other relational ministries among the churches. Contact Partnership@MennoniteMission.net or Sandy Miller at 866-866-2872 for more information.

Goshen College department of nursing seeks applicants or nominations for the following positions: ***professor in home health nursing*** (full- or part-time); ***professor in maternal nursing*** (full-time); ***professor in medical-surgical nursing*** (full-time). For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Goshen College seeks a ***full-time men's basketball head coach*** to begin in July 2007. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

On Sept. 8, a ***reunion*** for MCC and BVS volunteers who served at **The National Institutes of Health** (NIH) as normal control patients during 1953-1975. For more details contact nihcontrol@yahoo.com or call 215-257-7872.

Love nature and working with children and adults? Do you have leadership skills you would like to use in a new way? **Camp Friedenswald** is seeking a person to serve as ***outdoor learning assistant*** to start August 2007. This is a voluntary service position with stipend, housing, meals and insurance. Come and join us in the Peaceful Woods. Contact Justin Weaver, 269-476-9744 or justin@friedenswald.org.

The Mennonite Association of Retired Persons (MARP) seeks an ***executive director*** to provide visionary leadership, strategic direction and efficient management. MARP, which serves three Anabaptist denominations, challenges "older adults to continue 'living with spirit' by promoting service, peace and justice." Tasks include increasing MARP's members, leading programs and managing operations. Communication and computer skills are essential. See more details at http://marp.mennonite.net. Send applications and nominations to Stuart Showalter at stuartshowalter@yahoo.com.

Goshen College seeks a ***full-time administrative assistant*** for the Merry Lea Field Office located in Wolf Lake, Ind. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

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Full-time teaching positions available August 2007: ***biology/chemistry instructor*** (biology position could be half-time if applicant prefers part-time; ***physical education/health/athletic director***; ***mathematics*** (upper-level math). Coaching positions: head golf coach, assistant boys' basketball, assistant girls' basketball, head baseball (2008). Please contact Wilbur Yoder, principal, **Iowa Mennonite School**, 319-656-2073, wyoder@yahoo.com.

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English conversation teachers needed. **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

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Welile and more climb into the nest

Michael A. King is pastor of Spring Mount (Pa.) Mennonite Church and editor of *Dream Seeker*. Readers wishing to contribute to this ministry may email Michael at mking@netreach.net.

Just as our daughters were, for long stretches, gone from the family nest, a whole new family has flown in. The first new member was Welile. She was once our middle daughter. That version of her left in summer 2006. Inspired by the Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program vision of Mennonite Central Committee, she moved to Africa for a year. We hear from her every now and then, more often now as her time to return to our nest grows nearer.

But once she arrived in Africa, we learned she had also become Welile, which means "one who crosses over." We met Welile this year. When the doors closed to the South African Airways Airbus A-340 slated to deposit us 15 hours later in Johannesburg, Joan, my wife, and I felt shivers in our souls. We were at the beginning of a holy journey, we suspected.

We were right. Through the occasionally swinging door of the customs area in that tiny airport, we glimpsed for the first time our new daughter, Welile. That was awe-inspiring enough. Then we saw that grinning ear to ear beside her were African faces, all eager to glimpse for the first time these oddities from America. They were Welile's family. Two vehicle-loads of them had come to greet us.

Others who have experienced it will recognize what had happened: In Welile's culture, her family was our family, and our family theirs. Our own family was driving us through this so-far-from-home mix of mango trees, the ubiquitous VW mini-buses, paved highways leading to dirt roads, people who understandably see white skin as such an oddity that one girl once asked why Welile was all covered in bandages.

So when we arrived at the homestead, a compound of four homes and interrelated families, how dizzying yet miraculous it was to greet no strangers. Just Welile's "make" (mother) and her (and our) grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, cousins, cousins of cousins and more.

Two days later, the circle of family grew yet larger. Welile works with a Christian organization caring for those infected by HIV/AIDS, which is devastating Africa. Friday morning we set out, with Welile and supervisors Make Mary and Make Shongwe, on visits.

Just minutes of climbing up rutted roads from a city mixing traditional African culture and markets with a Western-style mall (and Kentucky Fried Chicken) took us to a different planet. The photo on the mantel of an AIDS-ravaged woman showed she had once been a breathtakingly beautiful professional woman. Even now, as she mourned the flattening of her face-lines due to weight loss, she remained austerly beautiful.

Photo provided

'You are my daughter': A woman suffering from AIDS

She chastised Welile: "Welile, you are my daughter. A daughter visits her mother. Where have you been, Welile?"

A sheepish Welile replied, "Oh, Make, I've been a bad daughter. I promise I will visit more often."

The most searing visit was to a house of corrugated tin, no utilities, surrounded by trash and worse. Inside a woman was fading into nothing. Her siblings lay listlessly on another bed. Amid the misery, they were addicted to drugs and alcohol. Parents were gone, AIDS victims.

In the local dialect, Make Mary questioned the dying woman in business-like tones. How was she feeling? What had she had to eat? Out of food. So, out to the truck for food.

Then more chatting. We waited for interpretation. Make Mary motioned Joan forward. "Take her picture." Joan was uneasy.

"She wants you to," Make Mary said.

Joan took her picture. We could only guess she wanted to be memorialized, to be known, to have been counted in the world even as she faced leaving it.

We walked to the truck. Make Mary said, "We visit because Jesus told us to care for the poor, the sick, the dying. They are all his children. They are our brothers and sisters." We got in the truck. Make Shongwe put in a gospel music tape.

Soon our visiting ended. We had run out of food. There would be no more until more funds arrived.

We flew back to Dulles, to lives overflowing with food, money, health resources. We ponder ways to tell of Welile, her homestead family, Make Mary and Make Shongwe, her mother who scolds her for not visiting, our sister in the shack. They are in our nest now. And families take care of their own. TM

RESOURCES

The Mennonite Handbook by Sarah Kehrberg (Herald Press, 2007, $19.99) combines historical and theological information with fun facts and practical tips on bing a churchgoing follower of Jesus Christ, all presented in a tongue-in-cheek way.

Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends, edited by Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Charles A. Anderson and Michael J. Sleasman (BakerAcademic, 2007, $23.99), helps readers think theologically about our cultural environment and respond faithfully as Christian disciples.

God the Holy Trinity: Reflections on Christian Faith and Practice, edited by Timothy George (BakerAcademic, 2007, $19.99), brings together leading scholars from diverse theological perspectives to reflect on various aspects of the core Christian doctrine of the Trinity. The essays highlight the trinitarian shape of spiritual formation.

The Trinity: Global Perspectives by Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, $39.95) presents not only the biblical and historical roots of trinitarian thought but a range of contemporary Western and non-Western views—from German and American theologians (representing feminist, evangelical and mainline Protestant theologies) to a range of Hispanic, Asian and African theologians.

The Triune God: An Essay in Postliberal Theology by William C. Placher (Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, $24.95) connects a radical view of God's transcendence with a narrative Christology. He weaves history of doctrine, cultural analysis and constructive theological reflection.

Invincible Spirits: A Thousand Years of Women's Spiritual Writings, compiled by Felicity Leng (Eerdmans, 2007, $15), brings to life many silent and forgotten voices in this collection of spiritual writings. Writers include the familiar—Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, Christina Rossetti, Emily Dickinson, Corrie ten Boom, Dorothy Day—and the unfamiliar—Raïssa Maritain, Hadewijch, Margiad Evans, Dhuoda.

Intimate Mutuality by Paul M. Lederach (Dock Woods Community, 2007, $20) details the story of Dock Woods Community, a continuing-care retirement community in Lansdale, Pa., that is celebrating its 65th anniversary in 2007. Order from The Acorn Shop, 275 Dock Drive, Lansdale, PA 19355.

Faith and Film: A Guidebook for Leaders by Edward N. McNulty (Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, $24.95) helps church leaders enter a dialogue with contemporary films. He introduces 27 films—including *The Color Purple*, *Crash*, *Hotel Rwanda*, *The Matrix*, *Million Dollar Baby*, *The Iron Giant* and *The Shawshank Redemption*—and includes provocative questions about each.

Lasting Marriage: The Owners' Manual by Harvey Yoder, illustrated by Lee Eshleman (Herald Press, 2007, $11.99), emphasizes areas of relationship maintenance often ignored in similar books, including the importance of a solid support network of friends, family and congregation and the need to take seriously Jesus' teaching about a joyful and simple lifestyle.

Take Our Moments and Our Days: An Anabaptist Prayer Book: Ordinary Time (Herald Press, 2007, $22.99) is a four-week cycle of morning and evening prayer services prepared for the period in the church year between Pentecost and Advent. The services focus on the teaching and ministry of Jesus: the Lord's Prayer (week one), the Beatitudes (week two), Jesus' parables (week three) and Jesus' miracles (week four).

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Gordon Houser

What if Jesus had stayed home?

God is found in right relationships, not in right ideas.—Barbara Brown Taylor, *Leaving Church*

One Sabbath day, after his baptism by John and his 40 days in the wilderness, Jesus went to the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth, read from the scroll of Isaiah that "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me." Later, those in the synagogue "were filled with rage [and] … drove him out of the town" (Luke 4:28-29).

From then on, Jesus traveled around Palestine, healing, teaching, proclaiming God's reign. His leaving home changed the world.

Years later, at Pentecost, which we celebrated May 27, the Spirit came upon Jesus' followers in Jerusalem and led many of them away from their homes, out into the world, where they brought Jesus' message to many.

We, too, are called occasionally to leave home, even—borrowing from the title of Barbara Brown Taylor's memoir—to leave church. As a missional church, we believe God is present and working everywhere. We are called to see God's presence with eyes blessed by the Spirit and participate with God in that holy work.

The Spirit calls us to find God at work in our world and join God there.

Getting out of our comfortable places and meeting people we might not meet otherwise is not easy. It certainly goes against my routine-oriented tendencies. But it enriches our lives and our experience of God.

Witness John Murray's experience with Bashu and his son Rahamon (page 13). John, a Mennonite pastor, became friends with Bashu, a Muslim in India. They became "brothers" and wept and prayed together when Rahamon died.

John writes, "We are united in love and peace, seekers of faith, hope, comfort and God amid the grief and uncertainties of life." His experience of God's love in that relationship would not have been possible unless John had left his country to visit India.

We live in a world polarized by people's ideas about one another. We label people without getting to know them, often because we want to protect God—or our idea of God. Taylor writes, "As a general rule, I would say that human beings never behave more badly toward one another than when they believe they are protecting God."

David Shenk (page 8) helps us understand Islam and its relationship with our Christian faith. Too many of us are ignorant about Islam and carry judgmental attitudes toward all Muslims. Shenk writes: "Every Christian needs a Muslim friend. I also wish every Muslim had a Christian friend."

Last week I spoke with a Mennonite who works with Muslims overseas. He said many Muslims think all Christians are like George Bush. Many of us Christians are embarrassed that actions of our government are diametrically opposed to Jesus' life and teaching are identified with Christianity. Similarly many Muslims are embarrassed that actions of terrorists are identified with Islam.

Friendships such as Murray and Shenk describe can help overcome such stereotypes. But to make such friendships, we must leave our comfort zones and relate to others as fellow humans, not to coerce or dominate them. As Taylor writes, "If Jesus meant for his followers to rule the world, then why did he teach them to wash feet?"

I visited the West Bank in 1995 with a group of journalists. One day in Hebron, we were served lunch by Muslims who could not eat during daylight because it was Ramadan, their holy month of fasting. We felt reluctant to eat in front of them, but they insisted and gave us warm hospitality. I would wish to do the same someday.

A woman in our church who works nights at a hospital shared with our small group some encounters with people whose beliefs differed from hers. She told them her beliefs but wished she could articulate them better. We assured her that who she is and the way she serves others speaks much louder of God's love than any argument she might muster.

We may not be thrown out of our hometowns, as Jesus was, but the Spirit calls us to find God at work in our world and join God there.—*gh*

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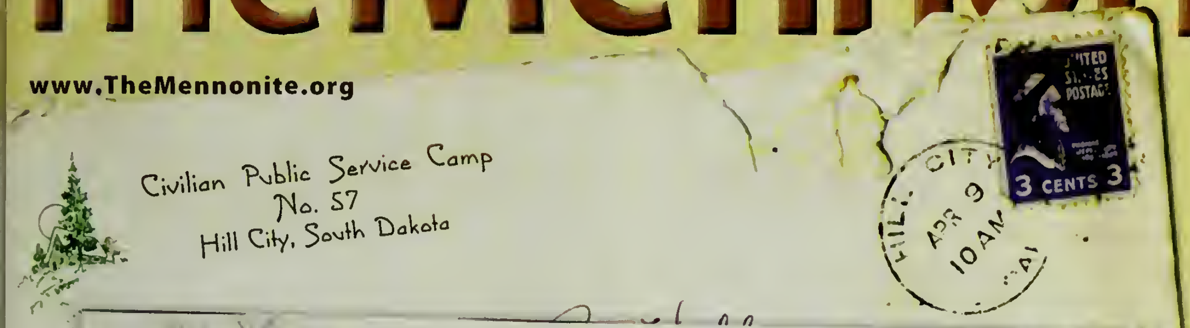

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Waves of guilt

Anne Stuckey was associate pastor at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio, when she died in a car accident on May 31 (see story, page 6).

Sitting on the seashore, I watch the waves struggle time and again to reach an unseen goal. It is as if they gather their strength and plunge toward the shore only to fall short. Then needing to retreat, they run back into the ocean and prepare to try again. There are times when the next attempt carries even less energy than the previous one and the water does not even come close to the mark that it set before. Other times some unseen force from farther out at sea adds mass and impetus to the wave, pushing it to new lengths. Succeeding beyond any previous mark, waders are shocked by their wet feet and now wet pant legs as well.

Lest you think my understanding of physics is lacking, I admit that my observation does not come anywhere close to the real explanation behind the motion of waves. However, I find myself identifying with the constant effort of the waves to reach their goal. For even when a wave reaches that high-water mark, it still retreats to try again. The water doesn't seem to be able to relax and just coast along. And I see that same pattern within myself.

I remember being attracted to the Mennonite church because it felt different from the Baptist community of faith I had known. Growing up, I listened to the sermon and experienced new guilt every Sunday when confronted by the fact that once again I had sinned that week and was in need of repentance. As regular as the waves rushing to the shore was the weekly rush to my knees Sunday after Sunday, asking for God's forgiveness. Sometimes the sins I named were not so great, but on other Sundays I knew I had gone astray that week and needed to try harder the next week to be good.

The Mennonites didn't seem to doubt their salvation nearly so much as I did. I liked that. When you are sure of your salvation, you can move on to discipleship. It was such a welcome relief for me to move out of the weekly wave of guilt and embrace a new call. However, some 30 years later, I now understand that the waves of guilt still crash on the shore for us Mennonites as well. Instead of doubting that God could love us enough to save us, we doubt we are doing enough for God to save us. We don't give enough to the church or volunteer for the right causes. We fear we will fail when carrying those who are struggling or will fail to protest injustice in this world loudly enough. Somehow we still miss God's high-water mark and fall short of that unseen goal.

So if guilt is not denominationally specific, how do we as God's children handle the waves of guilt that keep returning to our shores? Is guilt a motivator for good or something that forces us to act simply out of our duty to Christ? Usually I believe it is both. But I have to listen to God's Spirit within me to hear a voice truer than my sense of guilt. If I act repeatedly out of duty, that is a signal to me that I have lost my connection to God. There is no joy in my salvation when I put my head down and simply push forward doing what I have to do.

Instead of willfully working onward, I have to retreat to God's ocean of quiet to find those reserves waiting for me in the depths. I have found that when I retreat I become reacquainted with what God wants me to be. And I make new connections with who God has made me to be. As Paul teaches the Ephesians, "for we are what he has made us," which follows right after a plea to recognize that our salvation is not of our own doing but is the gift of God and not the result of all that we do (Ephesians 2:8-10). It is a lesson to be learned over and over again. TM

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Bankrupted by heart attack

Reflecting on “Health Care for Everyone” by Glenn E. Miller (April 17), I was once again struck by the critical need for a better system of addressing health-care coverage for our brothers and sisters in Mennonite Church USA. Personal experience with this issue became reality for my family after I suffered a massive heart attack; that led to a heart transplant in December 1999. As a result, we eventually were forced out of insurance coverage we had and had to resort to public assistance programs for required medications that Medicare won’t cover. This came only as a last resort after depleting all resources and losing everything.

I am pleased to see Mennonite Church USA’s agenda to look for a solution to this problem facing so many people today. Losing everything and being forced into bankruptcy due to health-care issues and expenses—while the church just looks on—is not the picture of Jesus I want the world to see.—*Dale E. Lehman, Myakka City, Fla.*

A Mennonite Bible

Maybe it’s time we had our own Mennonite Bible. I’ve been reading the responses to the Lancaster Mennonite Conference’s politically incorrect decision on ordination and thinking that there is a historical precedent solution. Martin Luther believed a number of books in both testaments were wrongly included in the Bible. He succeeded in removing Old Testament books that had come through the Septuagint, such as Tobit, Judit, Bel and the Dragon, Baruch and others. He also thought the books of James and Revelation in the New Testament were apocryphal but wasn’t able to convince a majority of his followers of it. So the Protestant New Testament remains as Athenasius recommended in 367.

Now perhaps those Mennonite writers who object to Lancaster Conference’s decision could institute a Mennonite Bible—picking up where Luther left off. They could exclude the politically incorrect parts of 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy. That would fix our ordination problem. Also they could exclude Titus, with its shameful stereotyping of the lying, lazy gluttonous Cretans. They could also eliminate that quarter of a page that denigrates gay practices so gratuitously. In other places, margin notes could be added to declare that certain verses are “disputed,” such as Jesus’ limitations on divorce. That’s the way the Roman church did it at the time of Jerome. We could simply declare all those passages to be Mennonite apocrapha.—*J. Lowell Nafziger, Rockford, Ill.*

IN THIS ISSUE

In our Feb. 22, 2000, issue we named the Civilian Public Service worker as “the most influential Mennonite of the 20th century.” This issue addresses that legacy. Ted Grimsrud (page 8) looks at why CPS is so important. Stories of two CPS workers follow. Melodie Davis (page 12) writes about her father and how his CPS work both reflected and influenced his faith. James Conrad (page 14) reflects on his CPS experience as a normal control patient at the National Institutes of Health. Jurgen Schonwetter (page 16) offers a unique perspective from the same period of history. He was a German citizen who later moved to Canada and later yet met two men who participated in bombing his hometown during World War II. We are mourning the loss of Anne Stuckey, who died May 31 in a car accident (see story, page 6). A regular writer for our Grace and Truth column (her last one appears on page 2), Anne was a longtime pastor and writer. We will miss her. CPS no longer exists, but we live in wartime and seek new ways to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. Editor Everett Thomas looks at ways we support the war in Iraq (page 32).—*Associate editor*

Children neglected in San José issue

I was looking forward to reading the May 15 issue about San José 2007. I saw a wonderful article about the youth convention, and the “Get Ready for San José” article mentioned youth and young adults, and I looked for something about the children. I finally found it—one whole sentence: “Conventions will also be held for junior high and children.” Again, children were relegated to an afterthought.

We have worked hard to help Mennonite Church USA leaders realize that children are important and are not an afterthought. At Charlotte, children were shown respect and value in reporting during and after the convention, but were afterthoughts in preconvention reporting. It seems the Mennonite media again needs to be reminded that in San José, children are also having a convention (not babysitting) with a curriculum, worship, workshops and service project. The children, along with their parents, should see the church periodicals report on their conventions as well as the other conventions.

The theme for San José is “Live the Call,” and for the junior high youth and children we hope you will see this in part as a call to action for your periodical to “live the call” for children. They are not only the future church but the church of today and need to be seen as vital and important to the growth and health of Mennonite Church USA. —*Carol Grieser, children’s coordinator, with support from Susan Graber, preschool coordinator, and Judy Friesen, infant and toddler coordinator*

Promises and an invitation

We are Barry, Jim, Loren, Jim, Howard, Nelson and Carlos. God has called each of us to work in our own setting—and together—to help people discover life's greatest joy: to know and follow Christ.

Mennonites are part of a five-century witness to the radical discipleship of the Gospels. We believe that the world needs the integration of heart and mind that Mennonites seek and that we need to learn from others. The passion for education that formed our institutions generations ago is undiminished today, part of Mennonite Church USA's commitment to the church and the world. We invite you to join us, and we promise you the following:

1. Spiritual growth and a Christian worldview that Christ is our center. From it, students can build a foundation of values and commitments in a complex world. We support the work of the Holy Spirit in our students by inviting them to know Christ and follow him daily. In partnership with home and congregation, our institutions are places where people may embrace God's redemptive work within them.

Mennonites are world Christians. Our campuses are transnational in scope and multicultural by conviction and presence. We believe great minds think differently and that encountering those differences prepares our students to serve the world community and boldly advocate for a Christian worldview.

2. A comprehensive liberal arts education requires students to engage in spiritual discernment. Our academic programs feature valuable content and excellent instruction by knowledgeable and accessible faculty who are themselves committed to Christ. We call forth not only intellectual gifts but the development of personal mission. Our goal is to provide students with the best content available and to teach them how to think and how to lead with integrity.

3. Our campuses are part of the body of Christ—supportive communities where knowledge, skills and character are shaped. Students are treated as individuals and made to feel welcomed and valued. We believe God created us to live relationally. Christ-centered relationships formed on our campuses can be cross-generational and lifelong.

4. We want to remove cost as a barrier for anyone who wishes to be part of our institutions. Few students pay the "list price" of tuition. About 98.6 percent of our students receive some form of financial aid—grants, loans and on-campus work compensation, along with congregational and area conference support, which we match. Our strong programs allow students to graduate on time.

Alumni of Mennonite educational institutions of all levels are likely to be involved and active in the church. They are leaders of the denomination, area conferences and congregations. Day-to-day, week-to-week, our institutions benefit families and congregations through leadership and resources.

We want you and your children to be part of Mennonite higher education. We invite you to visit www.MennoniteEducation.org and share your reflections. Thank you for the work you have entrusted to us, and may God bless your own work and witness.—*Barry C. Bartel president, Bethel College; James M. Harder president, Bluffton University; Loren E. Swartzendruber, president, Eastern Mennonite University and Seminary; James E. Brenneman president, Goshen College; Howard Keim president, Hesston College; J. Nelson Kraybill president, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary; Carlos Romero, executive director, Mennonite Education Agency*

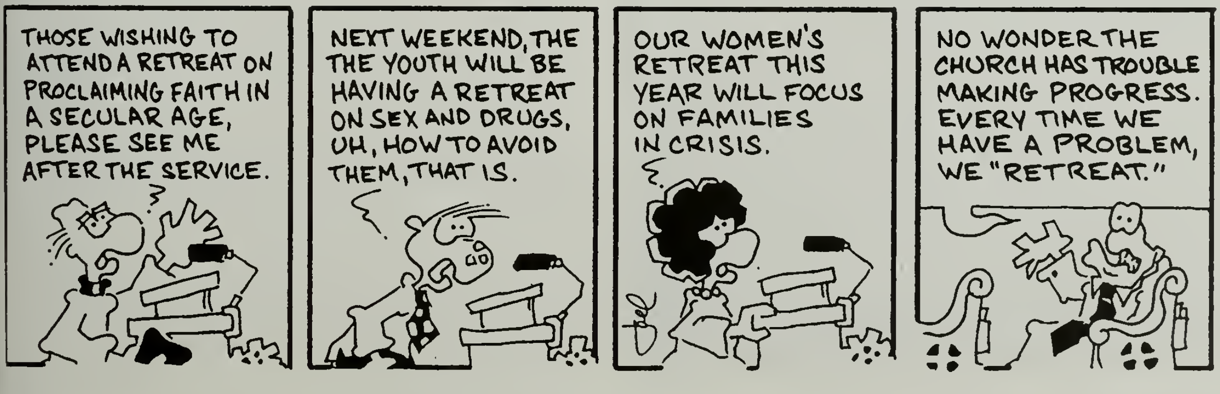
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

I believe the Iraq War will: (70 votes)

○ end in the next year (70 %)
○ end in the next two years (14%)
○ continue as civil war (10%)
○ not sure (6%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


THOSE WISHING TO ATTEND A RETREAT ON PROCLAIMING FAITH IN A SECULAR AGE, PLEASE SEE ME AFTER THE SERVICE.
NEXT WEEKEND, THE THE YOUTH WILL BE HAVING A RETREAT ON SEX AND DRUGS, UH, HOW TO AVOID THEM, THAT IS.
OUR WOMEN'S RETREAT THIS YEAR WILL FOCUS ON FAMILIES IN CRISIS.
NO WONDER THE CHURCH HAS TROUBLE MAKING PROGRESS. EVERY TIME WE HAVE A PROBLEM, WE "RETREAT."

IN BRIEF

Advent calendar coloring contest

MMA is creating a stewardship Advent calendar for families to use for Christmas 2007. A coloring contest for children ages 6-10 is being held nationwide, with the winner's entry gracing the cover of the calendar. MMA will accept entries of artists' original work between now and June 30. Drawings should focus on the biblical story of Christmas. For information, contact education@mma-online.org or call 800-348-7468, ext. 269.—*MMA*

Ethanol use affects the poor

Filling up the 25-gallon tank of an SUV with pure ethanol requires over 450 pounds of corn—enough to feed a person for a year. The increasingly popular use of ethanol as a substitute for petroleum is already increasing the cost of food, which is likely to adversely affect poor people around the world, according to *Foreign Affairs* (May/June). Rising corn prices are affecting the cost of other foods, since farmers are growing more corn and less wheat, soybeans, rice and sugar beets. Several studies have concluded that the caloric consumption of the world's poorest people drops by half of 1 percent for every 1 percent increase in the price of major food staples.—*The Christian Century*

Anne Stuckey, pastor and writer, dies at 54

ARCHBOLD, Ohio—Anne Stuckey, associate pastor at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold and a columnist for *The Mennonite*, died May 31 in an automobile accident near Peru, Ill.

Stuckey, 54, of Somerset, Mich., died when she apparently lost control of her vehicle on a rain-slicked Interstate 80. Stuckey's eastbound Volkswagen sedan crossed the highway median and collided with a westbound semi driven by a Minnesota man, who was not injured.

Anne Stuckey

According to news reports, Stuckey had been in Iowa researching a new book about her battle with breast cancer, tentatively titled *When the Pastor Gets Cancer*. She had recently begun a sabbatical from her pastoral work to concentrate on the book.

"She had just begun the introduction to the book when the Lord chose to take her," Stuckey's husband, Terry, wrote in a remembrance of her.

Stuckey often counseled with church members who were grieving or facing major life challenges, according to the *Toledo Blade* newspaper.

"She was superb at doing that and incredibly appreciated by the congregation," Zion pastor Ronald D. Guengerich told the *Blade*.

Stuckey was ordained in 1988 and had served several pastorates. She was associate pastor of First Mennonite Church in Iowa City from 1987 to 1989 and co-pastor at the church from 1989 to 1990. She was preaching minister at Salem Mennonite Church in Waldron, Mich., from 1991 to 2000, when she joined the staff of the Archbold congregation.

She had been a writer for *Builder* and was one of the writers for the Grace and Truth column in *The Mennonite* (her last column is on page 2). She also wrote *Training Ministry Teams: A Manual for Deacons and Elders*, which was translated into several languages.

Born Feb. 26, 1953, at Kitchener, Ont., the daughter of Richard and Elizabeth Porter Woelfle, she married Terry Stuckey on June 22, 1974. She received a bachelor's degree from Waterloo (Ont.) Lutheran University and a master's degree from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. She attended the Sorbonne in Paris and in 2003 graduated from the Theological Foundation at South Bend, Ind.

Survivors include her husband; a daughter, Leah of Elkhart, Ind.; a son, Matt of Elkhart, Ind.; her mother and stepfather, Elizabeth and A. Leonard Hagey of Cambridge, Ont.; a brother, John Woelfle of Cambridge, Ont.; and a stepbrother, John Arthur Hagey of Toronto.

A memorial service was held June 6 at Founders Hall at Sauder Village. Memorials may be made to Mennonite Central Committee.—*Mennonite Weekly Review and Gordon Houser*

Photo provided

Nazareth Village booms while uncertainty looms

Less than a year after regional hostilities endangered the vitality of Nazareth Village, the re-creation of a first-century village, it set a record for attendance. More than 5,300 people visited Nazareth Village in March—a 30 percent rise over the last two years and the largest attendance in any month of the village's history.
—*Mennonite Mission Network*

German Mennonite conference offers hope

KARLSRUHE, Germany—Hope and a future, words of promise from Jeremiah 29:11, stood at the center of a Mennonite gathering here May 17-20. More than 400 Mennonites came together for the Germany-wide conference held every three or four years.

The conference brought together Mennonites from the 55 churches that make up the Associated Mennonite Churches in Germany.

Each morning speakers focused on biblical texts that both challenge resignation and encourage hopeful awareness of where God is at work in the world. Digging into texts from both the Old and New Testaments, they spoke of hope and renewal, themes that also shaped the afternoon workshops.—*Mennonite World Conference*

GAMEO updates Mennonite Encyclopedia

WATERLOO, Ont.—When the Mennonite Encyclopedia came out in the late 1950s, computers were largely the stuff of science fiction. But now a group of Canadian and U.S. volunteers are halfway toward their goal of making the five-vol-

EMM photo

uvian dancers celebrate the gospel difference

cers from Cotabambas illustrate the difference the gospel made in their village with a typical dance at the annual eting of the Peruvian Mennonite Church. At first they face y from one another in discord and darkness, then join ds and walk together in light and happiness.—*Eastern nonite Missions*

ume reference work accessible to anyone with an Internet connection.

Called GAMEO (www.gameo.org), or Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, the Web site makes available nearly 7,500 articles from the print version. With more articles added weekly, managing editor Sam Steiner estimates that the Mennonite Encyclopedia's 14,000-plus entries will be online by the end of 2008.

The goal, however, is not just to replicate the printed encyclopedia on a Web site but to update existing articles and add new ones for 21st-century readers and researchers.

GAMEO is an inter-Mennonite, international initiative, supported by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission, Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee, Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite World Conference. U.S. and Canadian editorial committees are responsible for the content while a binational management committee oversees the entire project.

GAMEO organizers want to broaden the number of participants and invite other researchers and writers to contribute. To best incorporate those people and their efforts will require new technology, costing $8,000. "We've raised $1,000 thus far and need at least $6,000 in hand before we can move ahead with the [computer] conversion," Steiner says.—*Mennonite Church USA*

ADNet to launch accessibility network

GOSHEN, Ind.—A new program of Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADNet) will promote congregational accessibility for people with disabilities and mental illness. The new endeavor, called the Congregational Accessibility Network (CAN), is being launched at Mennonite Church USA's San José 2007 convention, July 2-6.

An online survey will generate the code for a congregation to put a seal on its Web site. The CAN seal will provide information at a glance about the specific ways in which that congregation is accessible.—*ADNet*

AMBS alumni give award to Haile, Yaguchi

ELKHART, Ind.—Ahmed Haile and Yorifumi Yaguchi are the 2007 recipients of the Alumni Ministry and Service Award for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Haile is a peace studies instructor at Daystar University in Nairobi, Kenya, and gives leadership to Somali Christians studying at the university.

Yaguchi combines an unusual mix of theology, pastoral work and poetry writing (see "A Poet of Peace," March 6). A 1965 graduate of Goshen (Ind.) Biblical Seminary, Yorifumi was a professor of English poetry and Bible literature at Hokusei Gakuen University in Sapporo for 33 years and edited *Poetry Nippon*, a Japanese magazine of English poems. He also was a pastor of several churches for 40 years.—*AMBS*

Goshen, Bethel name new basketball coaches

GOSHEN, Ind., and NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Gary Chupp is returning to his hometown to be Goshen College's new men's basketball coach. Meanwhile, Mark Yoder will return to head up the men's basketball program at Bethel College.

Goshen athletic director Ken Pletcher announced May 30 that Chupp, the men's basketball coach of Bethel, was selected following a national search to replace Stan Daugherty, who resigned earlier in May.

Bethel's athletic director Diane Flickner announced Yoder's appointment June 5. Yoder coached at Bethel from 1993 to 1998. Chupp became Bethel's coach in 1999.—*Goshen College and Bethel College*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Slough named academic dean at AMBS

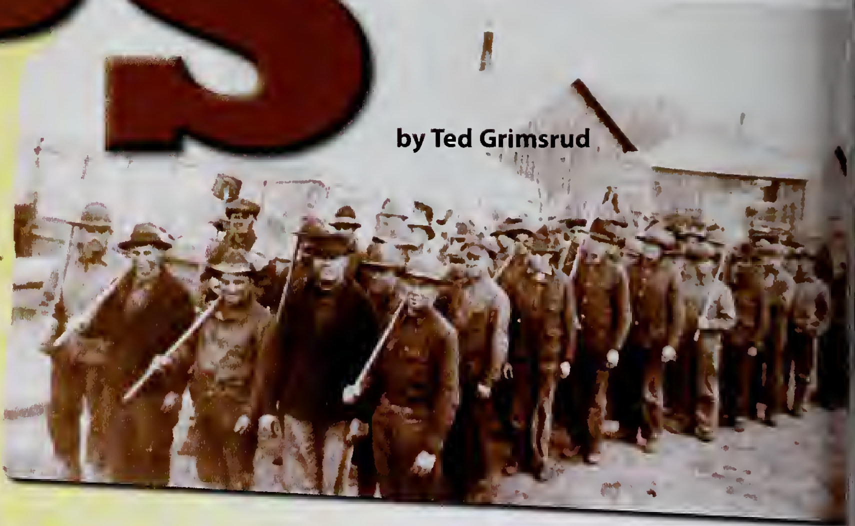
Rebecca Slough, associate professor of worship and the arts at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., will begin as academic dean on July 1. Slough joined the AMBS faculty in 1998, teaching in the areas of church music, worship and the arts, in addition to serving as director of field education and director of Christian formation for portions of her tenure at the seminary. During the spring semester of 2006, she served as acting dean while Loren Johns, current dean, was on sabbatical.—*AMBS*

Building Bridges conference to be held in February

A conference, "Bridging Divides: Uniting the Church for Peacemaking," sponsored by the Anabaptist Peace Center Washington, D.C., will be held Feb. 7-9, 2008, in Washington. It is for pastors, theologians, service workers, academics and others interested in how the church can take care of its own divisions and work to heal the divisions in our communities. For information, see apcwdc.Mennonite.net.—*Keith Swartzendruber*

The legacy of CPS

by Ted Grimsrud



Photos from Mennonite Church USA Archives—North Newton, Kan.

During World War II, about 12,000 young American men served their country performing service separate from the military in a program called Civilian Public Service (CPS). About 40 percent of those World War II conscientious objectors (COs) came from Mennonite communities.

The CPS generation is passing from the scene. The youngest living CPSers are now about 80 years old. As those holding direct memories of CPS move on, will future generations see the CPS experience as important, as something worth continued reflection and appreciation? Here are several reasons why we should.

1. CPS stands as a reminder of people saying no even to this "good" war. In the face of the strong cultural consensus of the time in support of the American war effort, people witnessed to their convictions that even such a "good" war is still unacceptable. For Christians who see Jesus' message of consistent love as the most important directive we have for our lives, this "no" is important.

Winning World War II was in many ways a terrible thing for the United States. The near absolute power the United States emerged from the war with has had a corrupting effect.

Winning that war shaped the United States even more into a permanent war state, governed most of all by the interests of its military-industrial complex. For example, the claims that the

In the future, the courageous "no" a few thousand COs expressed during World War II will be seen as a prophetic act.

United States armed itself with nuclear weapons as a defensive measure against Soviet expansionism have proven empty. Following the collapse of the Soviet empire, we did not respond by cutting back our nuclear might but expanded it.

In the future, the courageous "no" a few thousand COs expressed during World War II will be seen as a prophetic act. People will recognize in the witness of the CPSers what theologians call a proleptic expression in which the needed future outcome (peace on earth) finds a small but truthful expression in the present.

2. CPS provides a fruitful case study for illuminating various approaches to social action. I see four different types of approaches COs tended to take: the "resister," "transformer," "servant" and "separatist" tendencies.

"Resisters" thought in terms of the dictates of their sense of right and wrong. Their consciences convinced them that war is always wrong. Some believed in noncooperation, resisting the war system however they could. Many chose not to go along with the draft at all, foregoing the compromises that legally acceptable alternative service entailed and spending time in prison instead.

"Transformers" were influenced by the social gospel vision for transforming society as a whole to be peaceable. Many went into CPS hoping to find opportunity to work at such social transformation. Often they were frustrated with the limited opportunities they found for meaningful social action within CPS. However, when opportunities for service in mental hospitals opened up, some found some satisfaction.

"Servants," most typically Mennonites, saw their calling primarily as offering acts of service that gently contributed to the well-being of others. These COs eagerly took new opportunities such as mental health work as they arose, not so much out of dissatisfaction with the nature of the existing opportunities within CPS as out of a simpler desire to help wherever they could.

Finally, "separatists" tended to think mostly in terms of their calling not to be conformed to the wider society. Many of these were Jehovah's Witnesses. The Witnesses sought mostly to remain true to their sense of being separate from the warring and ungodly society that was asking them to participate in human-initiated warfare.

These four tendencies reflect four Christian options. Are we called overtly to resist the powers-that-be as firmly as we can, avoiding compromise and challenging a warring world to turn around before it's too late? Or are we called to think in terms of constructive social action that works within the system to bring about change—with a sense of optimism that the system may be transformed? Or should we understand our Christian calling in terms of Jesus' call to be "servants of all," witnessing to peace amid the world's violence, mostly by our spirit of personal involvement in meeting people's needs? Or is our main focus to be on our own community, seeking faithfulness by remaining separate from the worldly system that is rebelling against God and inevitably doomed?

Mennonites often chose loyalty to the church community over loyalty to American society.

3. The CPS experience makes clear the importance of communities of support for the creation and sustenance of peace convictions. The role played by the growing-up contexts for COs was huge.

Most (not all) World War II COs in some significant sense lived in two distinct communities—the community of their church and the community of U.S. society. For most American Christians (I think of my own father, a born-and-bred Lutheran and son of a pastor, who went to war), the two "communities" of church and society were not in tension about the issue of fighting in war. When the state demanded involvement in its war, most without much thought said yes (especially given the obvious evils of the Nazis and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor).

For many Mennonite young men, though, church communities left them unwilling to accept the state's call due to the centrality they placed on the Sermon on the Mount. When there was a tension between loyalties to their two communities, often they chose loyalty to the church community over loyalty to American society.

Beyond strong support within the church community to choose the path of conscientious objection, Mennonite communities also made commitments to provide ongoing support for their young men serving in alternative service.

We see in this story a combination of communal factors that created and sustained pacifist convictions—teaching and valuing the peace position,

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

modeling from older people (here the experience of COs to World War I played a major role), strong pressure to remain true to the church's position and extensive moral and material support as COs found themselves remaining in CPS much longer than anyone anticipated.

4. CPS has had a major impact on Mennonite churches over the past 60 years. The CPS experience transformed the character of the Mennonite community in the United States.

An entire generation of leaders emerged from CPS to guide Mennonite communities—educational and denominational leadership, expanded ministries of Mennonite Central Committee, the emergence of Mennonite Disaster Service and Mennonite mental health hospitals.

We may also note the in-the-pew impact. Thousands of young men returned from their intensely broadening CPS experiences to "normal" life as significantly changed people. Virtually all the former CPSers I have talked with speak of lives much more devoted to service, travel and peace as a consequence of that experience.

The CPS experience broke down many walls that separated Mennonites. Leadership of Mennonite CPS required cooperative work among the various Mennonite branches. Camp life usually included a variety of Mennonites. Contacts were made, prejudices punctured and relationship built that brought Mennonites together in unprecedented ways.

Thousands of young men returned from their intensely broadening CPS experiences to "normal" life as significantly changed people.

The CPS experience also shaped Mennonite peace theology—a movement from nonresistance to social activism. To illustrate, one CPSer I talked with grew up in a traditional Mennonite community and entered CPS in obedience to his church leaders and his parents' wishes. While in CPS he came to own his peace convictions for himself, and in the rest of his life he devoted himself to peace work. He told me that if he had to do it again, he would refuse to cooperate with the draft at all. Instead he would go to prison as a resister due to his convictions concerning the evils of warfare for all people and the need to struggle against it.

Mennonite Church USA Archives—North Newton, Kan.

I could mention other themes as well, such as the impact on the mental health field in the United States flowing out of the CPSers who worked in mental hospitals—leading both to reform movements within the mental health system and the building of new mental health facilities that embodied Mennonite values. Or the role of the World War II experience in shaping future governmental policies toward COs that were much more respectful and flexible. Or the environmental good that was done through forest and agricultural conservation work.

CPS remains an important part of our heritage—not just as history but more as a living reminder of the challenges of following Jesus in a warring world and the fruitfulness that may follow from rigorous efforts to remain faithful.

Ted Grimsrud is associate professor of theology and peace studies at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Looking down on things

by Dora Dueck

After viewing Carl Hiebert's aerial photographs, taken from an ultralight, in This Land I Love: Waterloo County

A troubadour of low slow flight has given me a gift:
looking down on things, on tops and heads and hair
of things, to see how land divides as farmers cut and
comb their fields and keep them trimmed for eyes
of birds and God, how sinuous the river runs, how
maples splay like ferns and horses stretch so long—
rumps like peaches flowing into wine bottle necks—
how leafless trees entwine their shadows, twirl on
snow, and I think that if I fell, summer corn would
open as water, and I would go down easy into clear green seams.

I have to borrow my descriptions. On the ground,
I recognize horses, people, trees. Downward, recognition
shifts, and things resemble not themselves but other
shapes and textures I have known. Roofs are hills;
hills are mounds of corduroy or wool. Stooks are tufts
of cookie dough.

Do angels, birds and God have words for what they
see, expressions in particular when earth seems soft,
when fog as gauze lies down to heal the wounds below?
For stitchery of footprints over snow? Horses swimming
in a dandelion sea? For the downward plunge, reentry,
when everything returns to incarnation—dirt and flesh
and face-to-face? Is there a word like grace for looking
down on heads and hats, but some of them a-tilt, one
hand up to shield from sun, and one to wave hello,
tilting to the ultralight photographer who peers
into their sky-borne gestures?

Dora Dueck lives in Winnipeg.

Photo by Carl Hiebert

Bent toward peace

by Melodie Davis

The education and witness of a peace and justice lover

My father had a deep bent toward being a peacemaker, but only later in life did I realize how much he had been shaped—like many Mennonites of his generation—by his service and training in Civilian Public Service (CPS) camps during World War II.

Eventually he was ordained as a deacon in the Mennonite church and served almost in an associate pastor role, but he had dropped out of school (which he didn't mind) after ninth grade to help plow the farm with huge draft horses.

As a teenager, I was particularly aware of his lack of formal education. I remember squirming when Daddy prayed aloud at church, mangling metaphors or stumbling over King James' "eth" endings and pronunciations of Jehoiachin and Shemaiah. I remember him thanking God for the "right uses of our minds." Did he mean "right usage" of the mind? Right use of a single mind, singular? My budding English-major self cringed.

He grew up in Emmatown Mennonite Church (northern Indiana, population 45), the son of a thrasher who traveled around harvesting crops with a steam engine. My grandpa, the thrasher, while a Mennonite, chewed tobacco all his life, so I interpret that to mean Grandpa himself was probably never in line for deaconhood.

At night the cockroaches came out; he thought at first they were young rats, they were so big.

When he was drafted, even though he was a conscientious objector (CO), he was bussed by the army with many others for physicals. "There were hundreds of us boys who went from doctor to doctor with nothing on. I felt dehumanized, as I was going to be if I accepted going to any branch of the army. Just a mechanical part of a machine," he once wrote me in a letter he sent along with a magazine excerpt from a book, *For Conscience Sake* by Solomon Stucky (Herald Press). In the clip, Stucky writes about the humiliating physical examinations in which the inductees are crowded together naked as they were bent over and examined and asked to "milk it down" to check for infectious drainages.

"The book just brought it all back to memory," wrote my father.

Instead of accepting a part in the military machine (Dad always said he'd have been a medic if they had allowed him to treat both sides), he was sent to serve in a mental hospital in Ypsilanti, Mich., among other places. His "war stories" alternated between anger at the state employee attendants and compassion for the patients. The men at the mental hospital were sometimes "treated like animals," Dad said. He recalled an incident when he was helping check patients coming out of the dining hall, where patients sometimes tried to sneak out knives and forks. "And one fella, poor guy, we caught him with a fork, but the other attendant, why, he just beat the poor guy up. I was ashamed to be a human being. And there wasn't anything I could do."

He grieved for the "poor men who just sat around all day in cages, some of them naked, some of them smearing excrement on the walls. They didn't know better. They would just stare or talk to nobody. They just didn't have the right uses of their minds," was his understanding of mental illness at the time. At night the cockroaches came out; he thought at first they were young rats, they were so big. In time he got used to them and sitting on a toilet with no seat, which was removed so inmates couldn't break the seats to make a weapon.

Through his four years as a CO, my father's thinking was impacted in additional ways as a Christian and Anabaptist. He found his spiritual life growing as he spent much of his time reading the Bible and learning the way of nonviolence from his mentors. Especially when he worked in Nebraska and Montana, the men "in camp" had time to read, study and pray. We often heard him quoting Mennonite writers and thinkers of the day—H.S. Bender, J.C. Wenger, John Howard Yoder. His self-education continued back home as he devoured church periodicals, Sunday school lessons and the few books we had.

Our church (North Goshen [Ind.] Mennonite) must have thought enough of him and his Christian witness or leadership qualities to nominate him to be ordained as a deacon. At our church, the deacon helped the pastor, especially with the "visitation of widows and orphans." Dad was nominated along with several others, which resulted in a tie between him and another man.

They used the biblical "lot," arranging two Bibles with a slip of paper in one; whoever chose

Roy H. Umble Collection, Mennonite Church USA Archives—Goshen, Ind.

the Bible with the paper was deacon.

Dad picked that Bible and was ordained in 1951, the year I was born. His pastoral and theological education was affected profoundly by the tutelage of North Goshen's pastor, Russell Krabill, as Dad was privileged to be in the inner circles of decision making. He participated in some counseling sessions, church council meetings, prayers before Sunday morning services and, eventually, broader church leadership as conference treasurer in Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference.

Often deacons were paid only with heartfelt "love gifts" from time to time, so Dad's main career was as a farmer. But he applied his bent toward peace and justice issues to that "field" as well. Growing crops and livestock gave him much concern for economic justice and the "hungry peoples of the world," which he lectured us about every time we didn't clean our plates. He became involved in CROP (Christian Rural Overseas Program), which at first was a rural program that encouraged farmers to donate one acre of their proceeds to overseas hunger relief.

Eventually he served as Indiana state chairman for CROP and personally paid (actually, a few pigs sponsored the trip with their lives) for an around-the-world, once-in-a-lifetime jaunt with my mother to more than a dozen countries. Dad especially wanted to see places where the CROP and Heifer Project money, seed or animals were sent and used. His cross-cultural education was also furthered by the many international students and farm worker guests in our home.

Dad's health began to fall apart 20 years ago with the onset of diabetic neuropathy. He continued to teach Sunday school most of these years, including at Holdeman Mennonite Church, when they lived near Wakarusa, Ind., often talking about "the peace witness." Sometimes he shared that at times he and Mom felt alone when they took positions supporting the "poor, the forgotten, the immigrant" that were not popular in northern Indiana. Every time I visited he shoved an article, usually on peace, under my nose from our church papers, wanting me to read it immediately. He got me to help him write letters to the editor or politicians expressing how his faith impacted various issues. He continued to use his mind as he was able, in later years spending hours pouring over an article in *The Mennonite* or a passage of Scripture. Sometimes we weren't sure if it took him that long or if his mind had slowed down that much.

Diabetes took its toll, and signs of dementia were heart wrenching. He could no longer teach Sunday school. When I'd call home, rarely did he have anything to say to me, only responding yes or no to the most routine questions.

In his last months, Mom cared for him by herself in their retirement apartment at Greencroft. Some days he was alert mentally, but on others he was not himself. Still, in his morning prayer he thanked God for the "right uses of our minds."

Finally we had to admit him to nursing care. The Sunday before he died, several of us children were home to visit; so we took him out of nursing care to go to church at North Goshen. He enjoyed dinner with his extended family, said a coherent prayer for our lunch, played with the grandchildren, fed one of them.

The pastor had urged the folks at North Goshen that morning to write Congress regarding the immigration bill then in the Senate. Mom, even though her husband was terminally ill, felt stirred to speak out on behalf of the immigrants that North Goshen has joined in the last several years, feeling our country was betraying her by possibly threatening to make illegal any activity (including some of their church activity) that abetted illegal immigrants.

On Monday she wrote out a letter on behalf of herself and Dad. I emailed it via Greencroft's computer. A response came, thanking Bertha and Vernon Miller for their concerns on the matter. Six days before he died, Dad, at the age of 89, by proxy of his wife, addressed a member of Congress on a matter of faith and justice.

Somehow it felt like God was honoring Dad's lifelong prayers of thanksgiving for the "right uses of our minds."

Melodie (Miller) Davis grew up at North Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church and is a member of Trinity Presbyterian Church, a house church based congregation in Harrisonburg, Va.

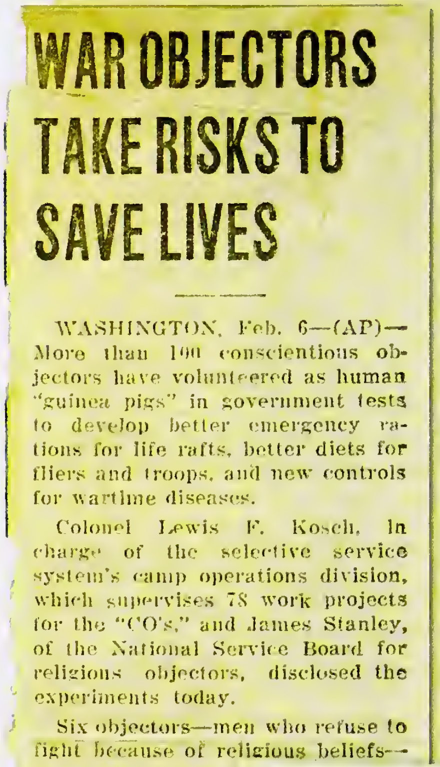
Growing crops and livestock gave him much concern for economic justice and the "hungry peoples of the world."

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

Corn oil and skim milk

by James L. Conrad



WAR OBJECTORS TAKE RISKS TO SAVE LIVES

WASHINGTON, Feb. 6—(AP)—More than 100 conscientious objectors have volunteered as human "guinea pigs" in government tests to develop better emergency rations for life rafts, better diets for fliers and troops, and new controls for wartime diseases.

Colonel Lewis F. Kosch, in charge of the selective service system's camp operations division, which supervises 78 work projects for the "CO's," and James Stanley, of the National Service Board for religious objectors, disclosed the experiments today.

Six objectors—men who refuse to fight because of religious beliefs—
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During the summer of 1959, I attended a family reunion with my future wife. Each family brought an abundance of food and spread it on a table for everyone to enjoy. I, however, was on a strict diet of corn oil and skim milk and unable to eat any of the appealing delicacies available. As I sat at the table and drank my corn oil "milk shake" while everyone else was enjoying the array of food, many people looked at me as peculiar. What they didn't know was that I was participating in a research program with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, MD. I was allowed to leave the NIH Clinical Center for brief holidays or weekends but with strict instructions to eat nothing but my prescribed diet of corn oil and skim milk.

Following my graduation from Goshen (Ind.) College in 1958, I entered voluntary service with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) as a normal control patient at NIH to satisfy my draft obligation as a conscientious objector (CO) to military service. Choosing to be a CO was based on my belief that being a follower of Jesus Christ means to show unconditional love to all people. In doing this we must follow Christ's command of returning good for evil. My parents taught me this Anabaptist precept as I grew up during World War II.

My father was drafted into the army during World War I, and since there were no provisions for COs at that time, he suffered a great deal for his religious objection to military action. Because of his unpleasant experience in the army, my father was grateful for the new provisions of alternative service granted to COs during World War II and thereafter.

Choosing to be a CO was based on my belief that being a follower of Jesus Christ means to show unconditional love to all people.

Duane Hougham Collection, Mennonite Church USA Archives—Goshen, Ind.

I was comfortable and confident with the decision to choose voluntary service with MCC rather than military service. Even though there is currently no selective service draft that forces one to make a choice regarding participation in military service, it is important for each young person in the Anabaptist tradition to wrestle with the issue just as seriously today. I urge those who claim to be COs to consider serving a year or two in voluntary service as an expression of their conviction and willingness to serve others in a peaceful role.

Between the 1950s and the 1970s approximately 25-30 normal control patients were at NIH at any one time. While there, we were assigned to participate (after signed consent for each study) in studies in men-

Reflections on voluntary service rather than military service

tal health, heart or metabolic diseases. The normal control patient served the medical researcher by being able to observe a healthy person's response to various environmental, dietary and experimental medicines, compared with patients with specific medical conditions. Both kinds of patients were studied at the same time. Clinical investigators at NIH, then and now, consider the normal control patient a vital factor in research to unlock the mystery of diseases.

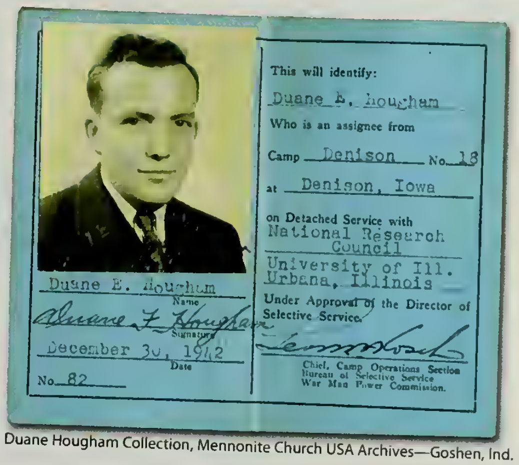
One study in which I participated while at NIH was the early investigation of what effect cholesterol has on heart disease. The study involved being on various strictly controlled diets. One phase of the program was eating the same solid foods each day for periods of several weeks. Another phase of the program was a nine-week diet of nothing but corn oil and skim milk, which was formulated to keep my weight constant. Following the corn oil diet, I was given a combination of coconut oil and skim milk for six weeks and finally a combination of fish oil and skim milk for two weeks. While on these diets, my metabolism was monitored with frequent blood tests and analysis of bile from my small intestine to evaluate my liver function. This study also served as a good test in self-discipline, as I never strayed from the prescribed diet.

Other volunteers served in many studies requiring self-discipline and some discomfort, but we were all respected and appreciated for our willingness to serve our country in helping find better ways to fight diseases. In a March 26, 1960, article in *The Saturday Evening Post,* Dr. Jack Masur, director of the Clinical Center at NIH, described the normal volunteers as "our most precious resource." Recently, Robert Shamburek, M.D., a current investigator in cholesterol metabolism at NIH, said he regards the normal control patients as "gold" in his clinical research.

While at NIH, the normal control patients also volunteered in child-care programs, providing activities for the children who were patients there. Others, including me, worked in the research labs with the investigators. With this experience and my previous premed study at Goshen, I enrolled in medical school after my service at NIH and practiced primary-care medicine until my recent retirement. During this time I prescribed some of the medical discoveries I had helped develop while serving as a normal control patient.

I prescribed some of the medical discoveries I had helped develop while serving as a normal control patient.

As I reflect on my voluntary service, I thank God, MCC and the U.S. Selective Service System for giving me the opportunity to contribute my service to our country and humankind in helping improve life through medical research rather than military service. One person alone cannot cure all diseases or stop all the violence in the world, but one may never know what the future may bring from willingly contributing to the needs in our world by serving in voluntary service as opportunities arise. The next time you see a person swallow a pill to control their cholesterol, remember that it may have become possible because someone took corn oil and skim milk "in the name of Christ."



Duane E. Hougham
Name
Duane E. Hougham
Signature
December 30, 1942
Date
No. 82

This will identify:
Duane E. Hougham
Who is an assignee from
Camp Denison No. 18
at Denison, Iowa
on Detached Service with
National Research Council
University of Ill.
Urbana, Illinois
Under Approval of the Director of Selective Service.

Chief, Camp Operations Section
Bureau of Selective Service
War Man Power Commission.

Duane Hougham Collection, Mennonite Church USA Archives—Goshen, Ind.

James L. Conrad is a member of Perkasie (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

NIH continues to enlist normal control patients for its research but not through MCC or Brethren Voluntary Service. Because this experience was one where many friendships were established in the MCC and BVS units, a reunion of NIH normal control patients, who served through these two agencies, is being held at NIH in September. This will be a time to reminisce, tour the NIH facilities and hear from some of the investigators how the normal control program has benefited their research. Anyone interested in more information about the reunion may contact James Conrad at nihcontrol@yahoo.com or via USPS at 1511 N. Ridge Road, Perkasie, PA 18944.

A child of war

by Jurgen Schonwetter

The victim meet

WWII Collection, Mennonite Church USA Archives—Goshen, Ind

My heart raced and my hands trembled as I took off in my van after the last delivery that day of Meals on Wheels in Abbotsford, B.C. I had just delivered a hot meal to the home of an 88-year-old Canadian veteran.

It was a lovely home. I rang the door bell. I rang it again. The door opened and a healthy-looking man, a widower, I discovered, greeted me, friendly after I said, "Mr. X [to keep confidentiality] I have a hot meal for you."

While he took the meal in its styrofoam container to his kitchen, I fixed my eyes on the feature wall of the entrance. It was adorned with a large photograph of a World War II British fighter plane. A large group of soldiers were posing. On the white edges of the framed picture were handwritten signatures.

When Mr. X returned with the empty container, I talked with him about the picture. He proudly explained that he was a member of the Canadian Royal Air Force in joined military campaigns with British and U.S. forces. He survived a number of 8½-hour round-trip missions in bombing raids over Germany. He named some major cities he helped bomb. Mr. X was a gunner and expert in opening the bomb chambers at specific times and at high altitudes. He smiled when he recalled having been personally honored with a medal for bravery by King George of Great Britain. He also had on display in his basement personal letters of commendation from the famous "Bomber Harris," the military chief responsible for all Allied bombing raids over Germany during World War II.

Mr. X, did you know that I was a 7-year-old child at the other end of your bomb chambers?

I could not resist saying to him, without the slightest emotion, "Mr. X, did you know that I was a 7-year-old child at the other end of your bomb chambers?"

Dreamstime.com

is bombers

The old man was speechless.

I left with a friendly greeting.

Driving back to Abbotsford Community Services, I told my supervisor what had happened. She was amazed. "I have never heard anything like that before."

I asked to continue serving this veteran with a regular hot meal. "It is a challenge to me, particularly as a follower of Christ."

This incident triggered my memory. Years earlier, with a bachelor's degree in my pocket, I left for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. I had to be a full-time seminary student to qualify my stay in the United States. Yet I needed an income to pay for tuition and family expenses. I took on part-time pastorates of two EUB [Evangelical United Brethren] churches (these later joined others to form the United Methodist Church). For me it was either serving two or no churches. There were no Mennonite churches who needed a part-time pastor.

The churches, eight miles apart and 40 miles from the seminary, prepared a banquet to which they invited the towns' dignitaries. The churches requested a lengthy testimony, more of a biography. I shared my life story, including my traumatic experiences during the Allied bombing raids during World War II over my hometown, Naumburg, a military garrison the Allies tried hard to level to the ground.

Naumburg is close to Dresden. Although Dresden had no military value for the Allies, Naumburg was of significant military importance. We lived on the campus of a four-square-kilometer ammunition dump. Massive bombing raids unleashed three levels of bombings: air-pressure bombs, then high-explosive bombs and finally Napalm bombs. These reached their targets, of which I was one. It's a miracle I survived in the basement of our apartment building. During the last air raid, all occupants of the apartments located on the ammunition dump were required to enter a special steel-enforced underground bunker in the middle of the campus. My mother, though not a religious woman, heard a voice telling her not to follow our neighbors into the bunker. This special shelter was completely destroyed by several bombs. Not one of the occupants survived.

God had granted me a cleansing and radical erasing of animosity toward "the enemy."

WWII Collection, Mennonite Church USA Archives—Goshen, Ind.

After the evening, a member of my church council, a man in his late 40s, approached me. He was visibly shaking. "Jurgen, I was one of the U.S. bombers over your city. Can you forgive me?" God had granted me a cleansing and radical erasing of animosity toward "the enemy."

The following Sunday, I preached about the Isaiah passage of God transforming swords into plowshares (Isaiah 2:1-4). "Years ago," I said, "some of you saw me as the enemy. Today I am your pastor." It was a moving experience for the audience—and for me.

Jurgen Schonwetter is a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C.

Why we come to churchwide gatherings

James Schrag is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

My first memory of a churchwide convention is the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) Triennial Sessions in Winnipeg in 1956. Our family drove from Kansas to Manitoba. We stopped in Minnesota to see the source of the Mississippi River. Being able to say I jumped over the Mississippi (a tiny trickle of water) was a wonderful bragging trophy for a 12-year-old Kansas boy. More important, I learned that the church was a mighty river, much larger than the tiny stream of my congregation.

I helped plan churchwide conventions as part of the GC program committee from the late-1970s to mid-1980s. I co-chaired a joint committee with Myron Augsberger, then president of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. We planted seeds of transformation in the first Mennonite Church (MC)-GC joint assembly in Bethlehem, Pa., in 1983.

In churchwide leadership after 1996, the Nashville 2001 convention was certainly the pinnacle, when merger was approved. On the first day, the MC and GC delegate bodies sat separately across the aisle. On the second day, we replaced the rows of chairs with an assembly hall full of round tables, mixing everyone together. The tables became a sign not only of a new church but of a new kind of delegate body. We arrived as two bodies and left as one.

I have traveled from wide-eyed preteen, 51 years ago, to today being one who plays a key role in planning the delegate portion of our churchwide gatherings. I have learned some things about us through these large gatherings of our church.

People attend for a variety of reasons. Many seek the experience of broader fellowship. Some feel obliged, while most feel privileged, to attend as delegates. Many come for the experience of a mass meeting, with worship and robust singing. Youth, particularly those from the former MC, continue a long tradition of youth conventions. For them, conventions have often been an occasion for making commitments to Christ. Former GC youth just as often made these same commitments at church camps.

Delegates come to give direction to the movement of the broader church. They affirm new leaders. They also come to find direction and inspiration for themselves. Where are we going together? What are the choices we make together that support God's purposes in Christ?

My theory is that we always gather with a common but semiconscious question for which we are seeking an answer. At Atlanta 2003, the Mennonite Church USA convention, I believe we all wanted to know if merger had really happened. The gathering gave this assurance. Then at Charlotte 2005, attendees wondered if Mennonite Church USA could really do something important. We spoke of being a missional church, with churchwide priorities. Now at San José 2007, I sense that some may wonder, Is there room in this church for someone like me? Indeed, we may be at an important moment when we are struggling to balance our individuality with our corporate call from God. We are often perplexed about the differences that exist among us.

We may be at an important moment when we are struggling to balance our individuality with our corporate call from God.

A theme, usually from a biblical text, is chosen. "Live the Call!/¡Vive el llamado!" from Ephesians 4:1-6 asks us to live lives that "maintain the unity of the Sprit in the bond of peace." The church is one under a God who overarches all creation. This is a timely focus, a reminder of our interdependence, not only with each other but with a sovereign God.

Is it necessary for the church to gather in this way? Yes, it is. How often we gather in this way could change. The reasons for gathering may shift. Delegates now listen to fewer presentations from a stage. We take more time to discuss issues around tables and give feedback to leadership. Youth and adults are intersected more often than in the past. Conventions have become opportunities for intergenerational, inter-regional and intercongregational encounters. Most of all, conventions will always be places where we gain a fresh understanding of our participation in the broad scope of God's missional work among us and through us as members of Mennonite Church USA. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **And on earth peace**—J. Nelson Kraybill
- **Wrestling with God**—Gordon Houser

AAMA calls for New Orleans church help

Churches Supporting Churches sets goal for 360 congregational partnerships.

Bob Zehr

Pastor Charles Duplessis and his granddaughter Germany meet with other Churches Supporting Churches leaders.

After Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast in September 2005, churches suffered—lacking not only bricks and mortar but emotional unity and stability. Since then, a national working group calling itself Churches Supporting Churches (CSC), is seeing to it that churches along the Gulf Coast are getting the help they need.

In Mennonite Church USA, the African-American Mennonite Association (AAMA) and Steven Brown, peace and social justice coordinator, calls the churchwide body to support CSC.

"These churches need help, and we in Mennonite Church USA have resources we can draw on to help them," Brown says. He travels monthly to New Orleans for CSC, participating in two-day pastors' institutes that give leadership training in community development, capacity building and advocacy.

"We need to get our Mennonite churches to consider partnering with CSC," Brown says. "It is a work that we feel can certainly bring peace and calm. New Orleans is in a bad situation, particularly churches in the community.

"Half the residents have not come back to New Orleans. They are still missing over 200,000 residents. There's a lot going on there that the media doesn't show. You see homes that have not been gutted, churches not rebuilt, jobs not returned, [the] economy is bad."

The CSC project, according to Brown, is assisting African-American congregations in 12 areas of New Orleans where Katrina destroyed or seriously damaged their facilities. The goal is to "restart, reopen, repair and rebuild the churches" so they can once again serve their communities.

"We feel that if churches aren't backing the churches, who will?" Brown says.

The initial goal of CSC was to help 36 churches, not just with bricks and mortar donations but with spiritual support. CSC hopes to partner these 36 congregations in New Orleans with 360 congregations nationally on a 1-10 ratio over three years. Brown's role is to help Mennonite Church USA congregations pair up with churches in the New Orleans area. Both financial resources and supportive relationships are needed.

"We now have five of those 36 churches in New Orleans up and running," Brown said in early April.

"If CSC can pull this off, it would overshadow the politics and red tape that has threatened any progress in New Orleans," Brown says.

The appeal from Brown, speaking for Mennonite Church USA, is for churches to join other congregations that have already committed to CSC.

"The wheels of progress turn very slowly. These congregations have been turned down by other organizations and have suffered a lot of road blocks," Brown says. "We need some tangible help from congregations who can put legs under their prayers for the people of New Orleans."

Brown sees this peace and social justice issue as the "beginning of the war on racism and poverty in New Orleans. Dr. King said there were three ills of society: poverty, racial injustice and militarism. Two of the three are present in New Orleans today."

CSC also has the support of Mennonite Central Committee. Mennonite Disaster Service is considering CSC participation, according to Brown.

"We need the supporting churches to take the lead in this ecumenical effort for Churches Supporting Churches," Brown says.

Mennonite Church USA churches interested in joining the Churches Supporting Churches effort in New Orleans should contact Steven Brown at 757-825-1133, ext. 206.

Working with him on CSC projects for Mennonite Church USA is Bob Zehr, former Gulf States Mennonite Conference minister. Donations to CSC can be mailed to African-American Mennonite Association (AAMA), 2311 Tower Place, Hampton, VA 23666.

Other denominations in CSC are Baptist Church Peace Fellowship of North America, Church of the Brethren, Every Church a Peace Church, Methodist Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church-USA and Progressive National Baptist Convention.

—June Krehbiel for Mennonite Church USA

These churches need help, and we in Mennonite Church USA have resources we can draw on to help them.
—Steven Brown

Third graders fund surgeries in Congo

John Martens, Gaspard Mahuma survey hospitals to improve interventions.

Courtesy photo

Gaspard Mahuma (left) and John Martens perform a surgery that was funded, in part, by children and adults at Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend, Ind.

> To spend what we do on medicine in the United States—when so many people in Congo could be helped with so little—is morally bankrupt. —John Martens

Twenty surgically-gloved fingers raced against the dwindling supply of fuel in the hospital generator. The visiting doctors, Gaspard Mahuma and John Martens, had traveled most of the day by motorcycle over deeply rutted two-track paths to arrive at this hospital with no resident surgeon in Congo's West Kasai province.

They did one operation after another, tying the last suture sometime after midnight. Within a few days, they would repeat the process at the next hospital on their list.

Eight of the surgeries that Mahuma and Martens performed were financed by the third graders of Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend, Ind., who began saving their allowances and raising money through bake sales after they heard Martens tell stories about a previous medical trip to Congo.

When Eric Streeter heard that $100 could pay for a surgery in Congo, he realized that he could make a difference in the world. His Sunday school class at Kern Road, where Martens is also a member, was inspired by Streeter's example and multiplied his gift eightfold.

Adults have also shared generously. In response to a request from Adolphe Komuesa, president of the Communauté Mennonite au Congo (Congo Mennonite Church), Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) has raised more than $21,000 for drugs and medical materials to be used in Congolese hospitals with bare pharmacy shelves and deteriorating operating room equipment.

"Though this sum may not even cover one major surgery in the United States ... it can make a huge impact in the Congo," Martens says. "To spend what we do on medicine in the United States—when so many people in Congo could be helped with so little—is morally bankrupt."

Martens grew up in Congo, where his parents, Elvina and Rudy Martens, served as AIMM missionaries for nearly two decades. In March, on his fourth medical visit to this central African country, John Martens performed surgeries in the village of Ndjoko-Punda on the wooden table that his father built in 1954 and on which his physician mother also operated.

As part of the movement toward improved health care in the communities where Mennonites live, an association of Mennonite doctors has been created that brings together two of the three Congolese Mennonite denominations for consultation purposes and to share experiences in medical ministry. Mahuma is president of this association.

"Through this medical witness, we can strengthen our bonds of community," says Komuesa, whose denomination oversees 18 doctors working in eight Mennonite hospitals.

As the doctor of the hospital in Nyanga, Mahuma oversees one of the better-equipped institutions. However, in order to place a phone call or check email, Mahuma has to ride his motorcycle 65 miles. His only means of communications from Nyanga is two-way radio.

Because many patients can't pay for health care, some doctors feed their families through other businesses, like retailing gasoline that sells for the equivalent of $12 per gallon in Nyanga.

Despite the adverse conditions in which the Congolese doctors work, Martens found them to be dedicated.

Although Mahuma and Martens performed surgeries during Martens' March trip to Congo, their main purpose was to conduct a survey of Mennonite hospitals to serve as the basis for designing effective and sustainable interventions.

"We are looking at a holistic program that will include community and economic development," Martens says. He adds that one of the most promising discoveries was an already existing Mennonite Brethren development program with expertise in capacity-building.

"In order for anything to happen [in Congo], there must be a partnership between Congolese and American Mennonites," Martens says.

North American Mennonites have further opportunities to join Congolese Mennonites in their healing ministries through children's activities at the Mennonite Church USA convention in San José, Calif., and a medical learning tour to Congo led by Martens. For more information, contact john-martens@sbcglobal.net.—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network*

Latin Anabaptists equip for missions

Forty leaders gather from 11 countries to represent 50,000 Anabaptists.

Javier Soler

Mervin Charles (left) prays with Edwin Herdie Castillo (center) and two other participants at the Latin Missions Conference hosted by Amor Viviente in Honduras.

Forty church and mission leaders from 11 Latin American countries and several representatives from the United States gathered in Honduras April 16-25 for a regional conference on global missions.

This representative gathering for the 50,000-strong Anabaptist communities of Central and South America and the Caribbean stood on the back of earlier meetings of the Global Mission Fellowship (GMF) of the Mennonite World Conference and the International Missions Association, a partnership of mission agencies networked with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM).

Javier Soler, chair of the Amor Viviente missions department and member of the GMF steering committee, served as convener.

"The purpose of this gathering was to cultivate mission vision and encourage networking in the world harvest," Soler says.

In a meeting last fall, Soler and other mission leaders recognized the need for a gathering such as this to build mission capacity through additional organization, networking and financial planning that goes beyond "inspirational sermonizing."

Citing the fact that 44,000 Latin American missionaries have joined the evangelical missions movement, Soler says, "We also have workers from our Latin American Anabaptist churches who are serving abroad in North America, Europe, North Africa and Asia. Many are hoping to go to the world's least-evangelized regions."

Special speaker David W. Shenk, global consultant with EMM, taught from the book of Revelation, focusing on three questions: Why? The Lord has opened a door for Latin American Anabaptists that no one can shut (Revelation 3:7-13). Where? The church is the "horse" that will "carry" Jesus into unreached regions and within contexts of violence, hunger, death and natural calamities (Revelation 5 and 6). How? The church is the "channel" that sends the river of life (the Holy Spirit) into the deserts and streets of our world (Revelation 22:1-5; Ezekiel 47:1-12).

Participants heard reports from conferences such as Amor Viviente and the Nicaraguan Mennonite Conference that are leading the way in international missions (Amor Viviente has missionaries serving in 10 countries. The Nicaragua conference has sent workers to Bangladesh and Thailand).

Willi Hugo, rector of SEMILLA, the Central American leadership training program, gave a presentation on the commitment of SEMILLA to help equip mission leaders from Latin America.

During a Bible study that clarified the "nations" of the Great Commission as "ethne," or ethnic groups, participants shared a renewed call to reaching the unreached ethnic groups within their borders. Some leaders from Venezuela, for example, said the Amazon people groups within their nation have never heard of Christ. Also, the K'ekchi' of Guatemala recalled a large unreached K'ekchi' community in neighboring Belize.

The group also looked at Anabaptist identity and broke into nine focus groups to discuss the 2006 Mennonite World Conference statement on core Anabaptist commitments.

Many of their churches have emerged in contexts of injustice, poverty and violence. Many are first-generation Christians. The Spanish culture, with its legacy of intimate interaction with Islam during the 800 years of Muslim dominance in Spain, can be excellent preparation for engagement with Muslim peoples.

Steve Shank, representative to Latin America for EMM, reports that each participating conference was encouraged to take steps in forming regional mission commissions to call and equip laborers for the world harvest.

About a dozen of the participants were young people already committed to global missions. They had come with their conference leaders to continue discernment about next steps for engagement in missions.

After the formal meetings, Amor Viviente invited the group on additional field trips.

"It went beyond discussion to vivid exposure to the ways Honduran Anabaptists are seeking to fulfill the Great Commission. ... The model of Jesus undergirded this whole event," Shank says.

Most national conferences represented at this conference had fraternal ties to EMM or Rosedale (Ohio) Mennonite Missions.—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

It went beyond discussion to ... the ways Honduran Anabaptists are seeking to fulfill the Great Commission. The model of Jesus undergirded this whole event.
—Steve Shank

Student struck by Mennonite diversity

Intermenno participant from Canada connects with Netherlands church.

A one-year cultural exchange program is giving Mary Lou Kehler the opportunity to learn more about her Mennonite roots in the Netherlands and the lives of Dutch Mennonites. Witmarsum is no longer an obscure word, says Kehler, who is from New Bothwell, Man.

As a participant in the Intermenno Trainee Program, Kehler says one of the first things she did when she arrived in Leeuwarden, Friesland, last July was to visit the Menno Simons stone monument on the outskirts of Witmarsum town.

This monument, erected in 1878, marks the location of one of the first Mennonite churches and the birthplace of Menno Simons, an early leader of the Anabaptist movement. Although the monument was a reminder of her Mennonite roots, Kehler, who worked as a nanny, says she is learning there is huge diversity within the Mennonite church.

> It is important for me to be part of a church … I feel their values are the same as mine.
> —Mary Lou Kehler

The Intermenno Trainee Program is a one-year exchange program administered by the Intermenno Committees of Europe. Young people 18-25 years old, work and live with European Mennonites and learn more about people in Europe, their cultures and their languages.

Intermenno was started in 1963 by young people from Europe who had participated in Mennonite Central Committee's International Volunteer Exchange Program. Although Intermenno is not an MCC program, MCC has assisted the committees administering the programs in Europe through liaison services, says Chris Landes, director of MCC's Global Service Learning Department.

This is the last year MCC will provide these services because most applicants now use email to communicate directly with European committees administering the program to increase efficiency and lessen confusion, says Landes.

Participants in the Intermenno program generally have two, six-month placements. Kehler worked in a home for the elderly in Leeuwarden during her first six-month placement. She now lives with a family in Breda, North Brabant.

At the home for the elderly, she worked in the kitchen and was surprised to see that meals were delivered to the suites of the residents and not served in a dining room to encourage more social interaction among the residents.

But her biggest culture shock came when she did not find shared values or spiritual beliefs with the youth of a Mennonite church. She felt disappointed because she thought she would be involved with church activities.

Although her first six months were marked with loneliness, Kehler says she learned that she has the strength to stand up for what she believes and everything changed when she started her second placement.

"It is very important for me to be part of a church," she says, explaining she is once again involved in a Mennonite church that reminds her of her home church, Silberfeld Chortizer Mennonite Church.

"I feel their values are the same as mine," she says, noting it is a multicultural church with English language services in Antwerp, Belgium.
—Gladys Terichow of Mennonite Central Committee

Meat canner completes its 60th year

Mennonite Central Committee cans 984,000 pounds of meat in 2006-2007.

Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) mobile meat canner completed its 60th year of operation in April. The 2006-2007 meat-canning season yielded 562,329 cans of meat for hungry people around the world.

Members of this year's canning crew were John Hillegass, Jerome, Pa.; David Yoder, Chouteau, Okla.; Eric Thomas, East Petersburg, Pa.; and David Martens, Winkler, Man. They traveled to 13 U.S. states and two Canadian provinces working with volunteers to help can some 984,000 pounds of meat.

"We give thanks for the faith and dedicated efforts of 35 organizing committees, the thousands of volunteers and the canning crew that have spent countless hours to ensure the mobile canner succeeds in its ministry" says MCC's canning coordinator Tim Friesen.

In April, two containers of canned turkey were shipped to Burundi to provide much-needed protein for farmers and their families in exchange for work in a reforestation project. In March, canned meat was sent to North Korea to feed patients recovering from tuberculosis. In the preceding 12 months, MCC provided more than 400,000 cans of meat to people in 15 countries, including Canada and the United States.

A canner reunion Aug. 11-12 in Syracuse, Ind., will celebrate the canner's 60 years of work. Former and current members of the canning crew, truckers and volunteers are invited.*—Mennonite Central Committee*

MDS assists Greensburg, Kan., recovery

1,000+ volunteers have already worked in town destroyed by May 4 tornado.

Andi Dubé

Two unidentified MDS volunteers help with debris removal in Greensburg, Kan.

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) volunteers from across Kansas, surrounding states and as far away as Valparaiso, Ind., are continuing to participate with recovery efforts in Greensburg, Kan., following the May 4 F5 tornado that shattered the southwestern Kansas town. Winds reached speeds of over 200 miles per hour, and 95 percent of the town's infrastructure was completely destroyed. Prior to the tornado, the town's population was an estimated 1,574 residents.

"Cleanup is going well," says Jerry Klassen, a field consultant for MDS. In the months following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Klassen served as MDS's Gulf States coordinator.

Klassen talks about how driving around town these days is difficult with so many of the town's landmarks gone and with street signs missing. Even the museum adjacent to the world's largest hand-dug well was left in a rubble.

"A huge part of the city has already been hauled away. Anything above ground is pretty much cleared. We're working on removing foundations now. Some discussions are already happening about beginning the rebuilding process."

In the days following the storm, MDS volunteers arrived daily on site—often bringing their own equipment, such as excavators and low-bed operators to help with debris removal, foundation excavation and general cleanup. Klassen estimates that so far more than 1,000 MDS volunteers have participated in recovery efforts in Greensburg.

MDS has set up its headquarters in Greensburg at the Greensburg Mennonite Church, bringing in tool, kitchen, shower and bunk house trailers as well as vehicles to begin the work of long-term recovery for the Greensburg community.

"Not too many other agencies are working in Greensburg at this point but as the discussions begin about forming a long-term recovery committee, many of them will begin arriving to help," says Klassen.

Usually after smaller disasters such as flooding, small storms and even some tornadoes, local MDS units respond directly without the involvement of MDS's binational office.

However, because of the scope of the damage in Greensburg, the MDS binational office in Akron, Pa., will be working closely with the Kansas unit to support its efforts. The binational office will provide site equipment and management, and the Kansas unit is already taking charge of supplying and dispatching volunteers from local churches and elsewhere.

Kansas has a large Mennonite community as well as an active MDS unit that enabled the quick response to the Greensburg tornado. Melvin Miller of Arlington, Kan., has been coordinating volunteers in Greensburg. Many of these volunteers are part of MDS' Anabaptist constituency including Amish, German Brethren and Mennonites.

"MDS is fortunate to have the support of so many willing volunteers in Kansas to carry this project forward," says Kevin King, MDS executive director."

MDS has already purchased a mobile home for Jeff Blackburn, the pastor of Greensburg Mennonite Church, who, along with his wife and daughter, was living in the parsonage, adjacent to the church prior to the tornado. This move will enable Blackburn to return to leading the Greensburg congregation through this difficult time.—*Andi Dubé of Mennonite Disaster Service*

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Sister Link helps West African women

Soap-making business uses $200 loan from Mennonite Women USA.

Courtesy photo

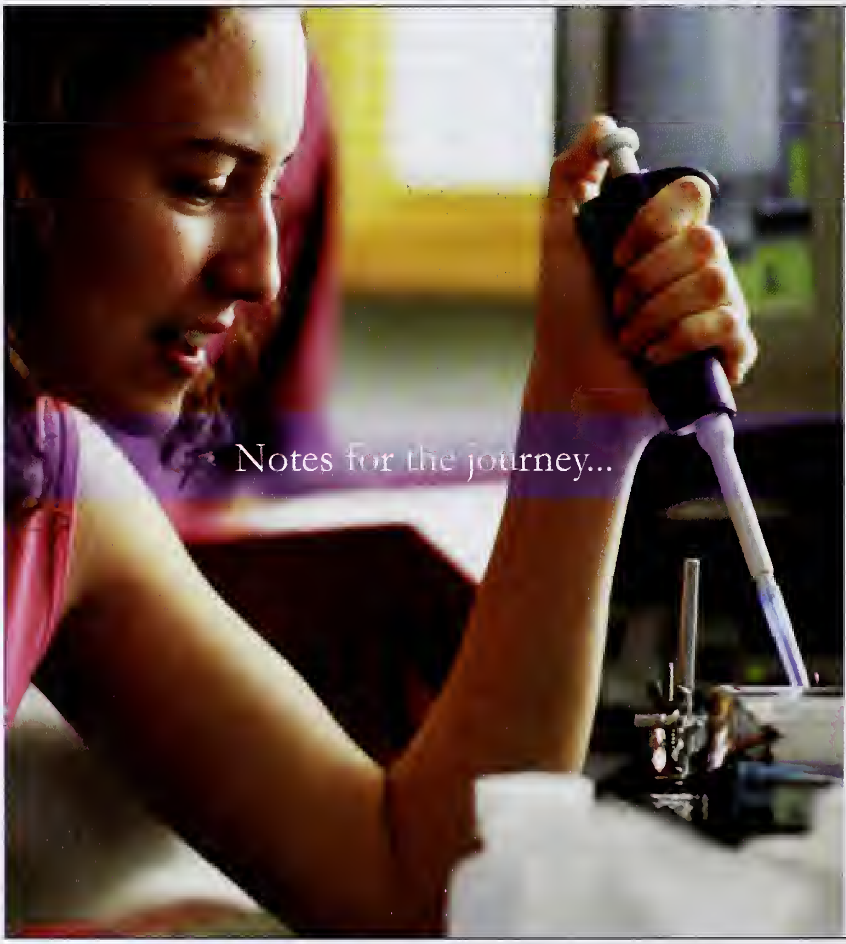
Women in the West African village of Pirang gather bark from the Baobab tree and grind it into the powder used to make Baobab juice to send back to their Sister-Link friends in the United States.

When 50 Muslim women in the West African village of Pirang met Pennsylvanian Ethel Clugston for the first time in January, they already knew her as one of 11 Mennonite sisters in the United States. They became sisters through a Sister Link partnership sponsored by Mennonite Women USA (MW USA).

Clugston's visit was the first time the West African women had seen pictures of their U.S. sisters. Each American woman attached a note to her portrait. These notes were translated into Jola, the local language, and a camera was passed around so that snapshots of the African sisters could be captured for U.S. women to see once Clugston returned home.

The partnership began in September 2005, when the West African group emailed a proposal, including using $200 for soap-making, to Rhoda Keener, MW USA executive director, and the women at Cedar Street Mennonite Church in Chambersburg, Pa. Despite different cultures, the communal aspect [kafoo] of both groups helped link them, says Denise Williamson. She and her husband, Gary, Eastern Mennonite Missions workers, co-direct the Mennonite Educational and Horticultural Development Associates in Pirang.

With $200 from Sister Link, the African women bought the oil, caustic soda, perfume and Dettol™ to make the first batch of soap. A village carpenter, whose wife is part of the Jola kafoo, made the screens to sieve the powder and a table for drying the soap in the sun. After several months of making a profit from soap, the group invested in tie-dyed and batik fabric. They sold these products to visitors from the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada. Within the year, the kafoo had paid back the Sister Link loan.—*Denise Williamson with Laurie Oswald Robinson*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COLLEGE

10 interns is Franconia Conference record

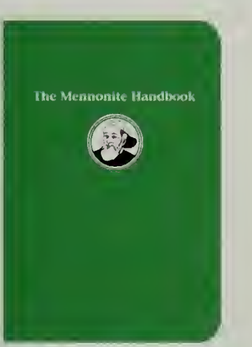
Summer program lets college students explore church ministry opportunities.

A record-setting 10 students began their internships through Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Conference in late May as part of Mennonite Church USA's summer inquiry program. Two college students are working directly with the conference, while eight are interning at various ministries across the United States.

This year, through a grant from Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va., three Franconia Conference students attending non-Mennonite institutions are participating in the ministry inquiry program: Tim Moyer, a sophomore at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, from the Blooming Glen (Pa.) congregation; Felicia Moore, member at New Beginnings Community Church in Bristol, Pa., who is in her second year at Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Philadelphia Praise Center attendee and first-year Penn State University student Andrew Liemon. Moyer is working with Franconia Mennonite Conference, while Moore and Liemon are assisting with ministries at their home congregations.

Two students are interning with congregations in the Midwest: John Tyson, a sophomore at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, and a member at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church, is at Christ Community Church in Des Moines, Iowa; EMU sophomore Jordan Good, a member of Bally (Pa.) Mennonite Church is spending his 11 weeks with Walnut Hill Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind. Three students are with congregations on the East Coast: Jessica Cassel, a sophomore at Bluffton (Ohio) University, is working in youth ministry at her home congregation, Souderton Mennonite; Emily Derstine of Plains Mennonite Church in Hatfield, Pa., a sophomore studying at EMU, will spend her summer in suburban Washington with Nueva Esperanza/New Hope Fellowship; Goshen College junior Peter Koontz, a member at Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen is with Oxford Circle congregation in Philadelphia. Two Goshen College students are participating in their college's unique inquiry programs—camping inquiry and service inquiry: Mercy Oyana, West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship, is working alongside managers at Spruce Lake Camp; Krista Ehst, a member at Perkasie (Pa.) Mennonite Church, is with Moyer at Franconia Conference.—*Sheldon Good of Franconia Mennonite Conference*

Herald Press: Humor in Faith and Health



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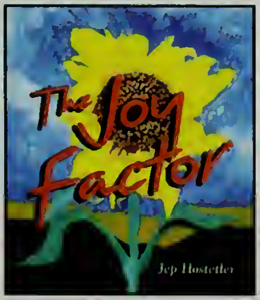

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CALENDAR

CrossRoads (Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center, Va.) is sponsoring its annual ***Tears and Ashes bus tour*** on Sat., July 21. For more information call 540-438-1275 before July 16.

San José 2007. ***Mennonite Church USA assembly and youth convention***, San José, Calif.

WORKERS

Cunningham, Katie, was licensed as minister of visitation and senior care at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on May 20.

Metcalf, Andrew S., was licensed for specific ministry as youth pastor at Weaverland Mennonite Church, East Earl, Pa., on April 4.

Roberts, Gary, pastor of Mt. Vernon Mennonite Church, Kirkwood, Pa., withdrew his credential on April 15.

Thomas, J. Samuel, was installed as bishop/overseer of Landisville and Manor Township (Pa.) districts on May 1.

Weaver, David, was installed as lead pastor at New Providence Mennonite Church, New Providence, Pa., on March 1.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Barker, Abigail Morgan, May 29, to Dave Jr. and Kody Mishler Barker, Sugarcreek, Ohio

Bates, Ian Willow Boschmann, April 16, to Scott Bates and Tonya Boschmann, Phoenix, Ariz.

Blyer, Caden Douglas, May 21, to Douglas and Kristina Blosser Blyer, Harrisonburg, Va.

Burch, Lucille Anna, May 11, to Brad and Suzanne Lichti Burch, Newton, Kan.

Francis, Tristan Liam, May 4, to Russ and Sharleen Loewen Francis, Goessel, Kan.

Hostetler, Seth Matthew, May 8, to Jason and Brenda Smucker Hostetler, Orrville, Ohio.

Mauzy, Madalyn and Olyvia (twins), April 28, to Darin and Tarah Lasure Mauzy, Las Vegas, Nev.

Mishler, Caleb Ryan, May 22, to Nevin and Kari Burky Mishler, Berlin, Ohio.

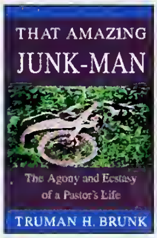
Monsour, Edmund Joseph, May 16, to Paul Monsour and Amy Hershberger, San Luis Obispo, Calif.

Nofziger, Colton Andrew, May 18, to Doug and Michelle Stutzman Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio.

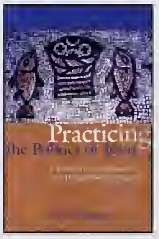
Oswald, Margaret Louise, May 25, to Clark Oswald and Elizabeth Schrag, Newton, Kan.

Penner, Devin John, May 3, to Steven and Faith Meyer Penner, Windom, Kan.

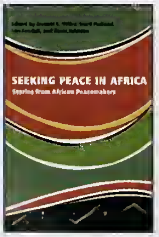
New from Cascadia, copublished Herald Press



That Amazing Junk-Man: The Agony and Ecstasy of a Pastor's Life, Truman Brunk, some of whose stories "are part Garrison Keillor and part Mark Twain. Filled with pathos, humor, and the Holy Spirit, these parables will enrich the lives of readers." —*Gerald W. Kaufman and L. Marlene Kaufman* 216 p; $14.95



Practicing the Politics of Jesus: The Origin and Significance of John Howard Yoder's Social Ethics, Earl Zimmerman. "This volume is a compelling study of the origin, development, and practical application of Yoder's teaching." —*Jim Wallis.* 276 p; $22.95



Seeking Peace in Africa: Stories from African Peacemakers, ed. Don Miller, Scott Holland, Lon Fendall, Dean Johnson. "Accenting insights from Africa, this joyful and hopeful book is about the healing of the soul, our humanity, and all creation."—*Dwight N. Hopkins* 248 p; $22.95

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Prose, Ada Fae, May 13, to Paul and Renata Prose, Columbus, Ohio.

Rolón, Amaya Evette, April 1, to Miguel and Sadé Atkins Rolón, Columbus, Ohio.

Sensenig, Aaron Kefas, May 22, to Victor and Michelle Yoder Sensenig, Samarang, Central Java, Indonesia.

Smeltzer, Noah Quinn, May 22, to Corey and Jennifer Cramer Smeltzer, Wauseon, Ohio.

Snyder, Rose Elizabeth, May 19, to Sam Snyder and Lori Nitzsche, Phoenix.

Swartzentruber, Ethan John, March 12, to Andy and Jill Porter Swartzentruber, Fisher, Ill.

Yutzy, Joseph Adrian, May 28, to Jay and Rebecca Edlind Yutzy, Harrisonburg, Va.

MARRIAGES

Cuenot/Fielitz: Melissa Cuenot, Louisville, Ohio, and Dan Fielitz, Dalton, Ohio, May 12, at Kidron Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Good/Mullet: Jason Good, Washington D.C., and Bryn Mullet, Harrisonburg, Va., May 26, at Lindale Mennonite Church, Linville, Va.

Gruber/Schlossman: Thomas Gruber, Ephrata, Pa., and Rochelle Schlossman, May 12, at Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Harnish/Shenk: Jason Harnish, New Providence, Pa., and Renee Shenk, Bally, Pa., May 20, at James Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Heinz/Kehr: Justin Heinz, Goshen, Ind., and Hannah Kehr, Goshen, May 19, at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Hershey/Stoltzfus: Jonathan Hershey, Singers Glen, Va., and Kari Stoltzfus, Harrisonburg, Va., May 26, at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Kalina/Mullins: Kristin Kalina, Creston, Ohio, and Donald Mullins, Olmstead Falls, Ohio, April 21, in Las Vegas, Nev.

Lehman/Wilkinson: Edward Lehman, Orrville, Ohio, and Maggie Wilkinson, Dowagiac, Mich., May 12, in Dowagiac.

Miller/Rice: Michael Miller, Millersburg, Ohio, and Amber Rice, Sugarcreek, Ohio, April 28, at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church, Walnut Creek, Ohio.

DEATHS

Anderson, John "Jack" H., 68, Shunk, Pa., died May 13. Spouse: Joan E. Thompson Anderson. Parents: John F. and Beatrice Anderson. Children: John H., Kierston T., Diana Reed, Tina M. Slaymaker, Aldus, James F., David R.; 32 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: May 19 at Wilde Funeral Home, Parkesburg, Pa.

Bachman, Lucile Nafziger, 91, Chenoa, Ill., died May 21 of a stroke. Spouse: Earl D. Bachman (deceased). Parents: Asa and Lizzy Egli Nafziger. Children: Shirley Corrie, Linda Joy, Donna Wehrmeister, Virginia Berg; eight grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 26 at Meadows Mennonite Church, Chenoa.

Derksen, Jacob Walter, 86, Butterfield, Minn., died May 18. Parents: Jacob J. and Anna R. Steinle Derksen. Funeral: May 23 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

Erb, F. Ruth Hershey, 89, Lancaster, Pa., died April 27. Spouse: Roy B. Erb (deceased). Parents: Samuel H. and Fannie G. Hershey. Children: Ruth Martin, Miriam Allen, John, James; 14 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren. Life celebration service: May 5 at Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Hess, Rev. John Henry, 84, Cambridge, Ont., died May 19. Spouse: Ruth Bechtel Hess. Parents: David Martin and Lydia Ann Buckwalter Hess. Children: Mary Lou Hess, John, Doreen Hess, Rhonda Willows; three grandchildren. Funeral: May 27 at Fairview Mennonite Home, Cambridge.

Hottenstein, Vera K. Stauffer, 90, East Petersburg, Pa., died May 20 following a brief illness. Spouse: Wayne Hottenstein (deceased). Parents: Isaac and Sadie Stauffer. Children: John H., Joseph S., Leanna Metzler; 10 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 26 at East Petersburg Mennonite Church.

Layman, Hazel Feltis, 90, Harrisonburg, Va., died May 20. Spouse: Roy Layman (deceased). Parents: Oscar and Eulaihia Riddle Feltis. Children: Margaret Shank, Lois Hertzler, Carol Parks, Joy Sherman, Byard E., Roy F.; 13 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: May 22 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Myronenko, Maria, 84, Eugene, Ore., died May 9. Spouse: Pavlo "Paul" Myronenko (deceased). Children: Nina Boman, Larry; nine grandchildren. Funeral: May 12 at Lebanon Mennonite Church, Lebanon, Ore.

Oyer, Leslie "Lec," 89, Fisher, Ill., died May 8. Spouse: Ruth Heiser Oyer. Parents: Joe and Bertha Zimmerman Oyer. Children: Carolyn Miller, Nan Cagle, Kandy Beesley, Kathy Dennemann; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 12 at Dewey Evangelical Mennonite Church, Dewey, Ill.

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Dr. John Stahl-Wert is keynote speaker at Spruce Lake Retreat's **Leadership Training Event** Oct. 10-12, 2007: "Harness raw potential for extraordinary results." Call 800-822-7505, www.sprucelake.org.

Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, a K-8&lt school, is seeking applicants for ***development director***. Responsibilities include obtaining donations and pledges from and personal contacts and visits with individuals, businesses and congregations; planning, coordinating and participating in fund raising events; researching and writing grants. Candidates must pocess strong interpersonal and organizational skills. Interested candidates send letter of interest and resume to: Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, 4647 W. 47th St., Chicago, IL 60632.

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Books on peace, empire, spirituality

Gordon Houser

The reviews below are available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

Good books continue to proliferate. As summer begins, let's look at some recent ones that should appeal to readers, depending on one's interests.

Peace: An important book, not only in Mennonite literature but in biblical studies in general, is *Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics* by Willard M. Swartley (Eerdmans, 2006, $34). Swartley, professor emeritus of New Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., has produced a masterful explication of the entire New Testament relating peace to the work of Jesus Christ and the proclamation of the reign of God.

This book is unique in New Testament theology and ethics books, which have neglected this key theme. As Swartley points out in his introduction, the term peace "occurs 100 times in the [New Testament] and in every canonical book except 1 John," yet other works ignore it. He even presents an extensive appendix analyzing this neglect.

Space prevents saying much about this work. Though addressed to the academic community, the writing is accessible and provides a rich resource for pastors and other Bible teachers. Many—even some Mennonites—are not convinced that peace is at the heart of the Bible's message, even at the heart of who God is. This book will help them see this truth.

Empire: Two recent books that address a subject becoming more and more prevalent in studies of the Bible and its context are *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide* by Warren Carter (Abington, 2006, $16) and *God & Empire: Jesus Against Rome, Then and Now* by John Dominic Crossan (HarperSanFrancisco, 2007, $22.95).

The former is an excellent introduction to the subject and offers a wealth of insight into the political, economic, societal and religious influence of the Roman Empire. Carter writes, "The New Testament texts guide first-century followers of Jesus in negotiating Rome's power that crucified Jesus." This book has nuggets for many sermons.

Crossan surveys the Bible and finds a hopeful message. While empires—whether Babylon, Rome or America—seek "peace" through military action, he writes that for Jesus and Paul, peace only comes through justice and fair and equal treatment of all people.

Spirituality: In *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways that Jesus Is the Way* (Eerdmans, 2007, $22), Eugene H. Peterson is concerned with the responsibility of Christians "to develop awareness and facility in the ways of Jesus as we go about our daily lives following Jesus in home and workplace, neighborhood and congregation, so that our following is consonant with his leading." He explores how the ways of Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah and Isaiah revealed and prepared the "way of the Lord" that became complete in Jesus. He then shows how today's American church has often focused on "other ways"—consumerism, celebrity, charisma—that go against Jesus' way.

Beyond the Law: Living the Sermon on the Mount by Philip K. Clemens (Herald Press, 2007, $13.99) is a Mennonite pastor's attempt to show that "kingdom values as Jesus interprets them look beyond the law to the goodness of God." Clemens focuses on the language of Jesus' sermon and provides many insights. I especially like his discussion of "perfect" in Matthew 5:48.

Dorcas Smucker can write. Pick up her book *Ordinary Days: Family Life in a Farmhouse* (Good Books, 2006, $9.95) and read any of her 31 vignettes about life on a farm with six children, and you'll be ensnared. One piece begins, "I believe we were on the third strip of wallpaper when I quit wondering what was wrong with our marriage." How can you stop? Smucker is a storyteller who finds lessons in daily life; in a real sense she is doing theology. She writes, "Faith, finally, consists of trusting when there are no easy answers, singing in the dark because there's nothing else to do and finding it to be everything." TM

FILMS

Away from Her (PG-13) is a moving Canadian film based on a short story by Alice Munro about an older couple facing the onset of Alzheimer's. The acting is superb, especially that of Julie Christie. You come away with empathy for every character. The pacing, the wintry setting, the symbolic use of color and of skiing combine to create an outstanding film.

The Italian (PG-13) is a Russian film about 6-year-old Vanya. The other children in the Russian orphanage nickname him "the Italian" because an Italian couple is interested in adopting him. Vanya, however, after encountering a despondent mother of a boy who was adopted out earlier, wants to find his mother. He escapes and looks for her, all the while hunted by a greedy adoption broker. The ending is ambiguous but resplendent.

DVDS

Hidden in Plain Sight (unrated) is a documentary about the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Ga., where more than 60,000 Latin American soldiers have been trained, including dictators such as Manuel Noriega of Panama and death squad leaders such as Roberto D'Aubuisson of El Salvador. This well-made film includes interviews with those opposed to the school and those defending it, along with footage of training and of the protests that occur every November. An excellent piece for discussion.

The Narrow Path (unrated) focuses on Jesuit priest and peace activist John Dear to look at the narrow path of nonviolence Jesus calls us to follow. The DVD, produced by the San Damiano Foundation, eventually gets around to some arresting stories by Dear, but it is poorly filmed.

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Everett J. Thomas

How we support the war

Why don't Mennonites do more to protest the war in Iraq? There are at least three reasons. First, most of us are comfortable in an economy that is boosted by the war. Second, we are ensnared in political party loyalties. Third, we can't decide if our denomination believes in pacifism or nonresistance.

1. Helping the economy: During the Vietnam War, the phrase "military-industrial complex" explained why warmaking is attractive to many companies. They make lots of money on it. For example, a plant that makes Hummers helps the economy in northern Indiana, where I live. It employs lots of workers, who receive a good wage. But this is just one of many industries that will fold when the war stops. When that happens, the news stories will be about people out of work and rising unemployment rates.

The poster-child for war profiteering is the Haliburton company. Associate editor Gordon Houser reports this conversation with a relative who recently returned from a tour of duty in Iraq:

"The way he talked didn't betray any sense of being there for promoting democracy," Gordon says. "It was just duty. I mentioned some things I'd learned from the Iraq War films I'd seen about the ubiquity and greed of Haliburton. He confirmed everything I said. The soldiers there all hate Haliburton, which is getting rich at the expense of U.S. taxpayers. Example: Haliburton gets $28 per plate for each meal they serve (that's per plate, not food); the soldiers typically use two plates, one to cover the other one so sand doesn't get in the food. So that's $56 per soldier per meal, three times per day."

We can pray that God will give us a new vision for responding to a war that makes our lives better in some ways.

2. Political party loyalties: Because Vice President Dick Cheney is identified with Haliburton, any mention of the company can bring swift reaction from Mennonites loyal to the Republican Party. That is where many of us get tripped up. Church Member Profile 2006 revealed that 50 percent of Mennonite Church USA members identify themselves as Republicans while only 20 percent identify themselves as Democrats ("A Look in the Mirror," Feb. 6). Consequently, our historic resistance to war is weakened by political party loyalties.

3. Nonresistance or pacifism: But more debilitating is our lack of unity about what it means to be a peace church.

Many of us understand our tradition to be that of "nonresistance" in a world that is outside the perfection of Christ. Sometimes it is caricatured as living quietly in the land while (secretly) being glad for a strong U.S. military that keeps the fight against terrorism located on another continent. While we would not personally fight, we appreciate and pray for a government that does that for us. Our duty, in return, is to be good citizens and contribute to society. But there is some integrity in relating to the world in this "two-kingdom" way.

Others see our tradition as pacifists, with a responsibility to divert the direction our country is going. It has been caricatured as activism without the gospel. An article we published several months ago describes what the writer saw as the problem during the 1960s: Some Mennonites moved to a "unitary pacifism" and made cause with a "blame America first" political pacifism ("The Two-Kingdom Politics of Jesus," Jan. 2). But there is also some integrity in the role of activist for those trying to address the world's problems.

Meanwhile, the war in Iraq continues, and there seems to be nothing we can do but write letters and pray that it will stop. However, our prayers may not rise very high when we secretly enjoy the wealth generated by the short-term gains of a war economy. Neither can we pray as a unified church if political party loyalties trump our commitment to peacemaking and the Prince of Peace.

Hopefully, the war will stop some day. In the meantime, we must take stock and ask whether we are helping it continue. We can also pray that God will give the Mennonite church a new vision for responding to a war that makes our lives better in ways we may not want to acknowledge.—*ejt*

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

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Obstacles to integrity and effectiveness

Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.—Luke 6:37 NKJV

Elaine Bryant is pastor emeritus at Englewood Mennonite Church in Chicago.

How often do we hear, Who are you to judge? from Christians and non-Christians? A note on Luke 6:37 in the New King James Spirit-filled Life Bible included the words "censorious attitude," which describes a tendency I have sensed in myself and others.

The tendency to find fault, be harshly or subtly critical, judgmental, legalistic or self-righteous defines censorious. The note in my Bible says the "practice of Christian love and forgiveness is a deterrent to a censorious attitude." Censoriousness is an obstacle to operating with integrity in the espousal and promotion of Christian love and forgiveness, as well as to our effectiveness in witnessing for Christ and encouraging others to embrace positions we believe critical for the promotion of peace, justice and righteousness.

Censoriousness is an obstacle because it is an attitude that can be linked to a love that has grown cold and a heart that is hardened.

The times in which lawlessness abounds can cause "the love of many to grow cold" (Matthew 24:12). We live in such times. Lawlessness abounds in inner cities, suburbs, government affairs, the corporate world and internationally. We need to beware of actions and attitudes that show love growing cold, because lovingkindness draws.

Actions and attitudes that support acquisition for me and mine as the preeminent consideration in decisions and relationships, rather than the Golden Rule and what the Lord called the "great commandments" and a "new commandment," indicates that love has grown cold. In Scripture we read, "He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me" (John 14:21 NKJV), and God "was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19 NKJV).

In Ephesians, Christ-conformed principles speak of the need to be "tenderhearted" and "walk in love" in order to be like Christ, which is God's goal for us. Our statements or behavior indicate whether we are tenderhearted or hard hearted, whether we walk in love or our love has grown cold, whether we are censorious or not.

Paul's love grew cold toward John Mark. Christians manifest hard-heartedness and love grown cold (as I did for years), when we struggle with giving to people on the street (who ask for money) in spite of the Lord's words, "Give to him who asks of you" (Matthew 5:42 NKJV). Another manifestation for me is extending forgiveness—to those who hurt others or me—in spite of the Lord's teaching about forgiving. In such circumstances love grows cold and hardness of heart sets in, evidenced by a censorious attitude.

Thankfully, God's grace helped me give a name to, repent of and ask forgiveness for and help with rejecting this subtle obstacle to ministry and personal integrity and effectiveness. God has also provided me with a devotional tool, *Starting Your Day Right* by Joyce Meyer, which says: "The devil sets us up so that we act ugly, throw fits [speak censoriously] and ruin our witness of what God has done in our lives" as well as what we believe God wants others to know and embrace about peace, peacemaking, justice and righteousness.

Meyer goes on to write: "The Holy Spirit will give you the power to walk in love everywhere you go. Don't leave home without inviting him to fill you with the grace to demonstrate God's love and compassion toward everyone you meet."

I would add: without censoriousness.

The Mennonite

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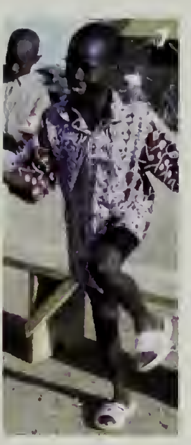

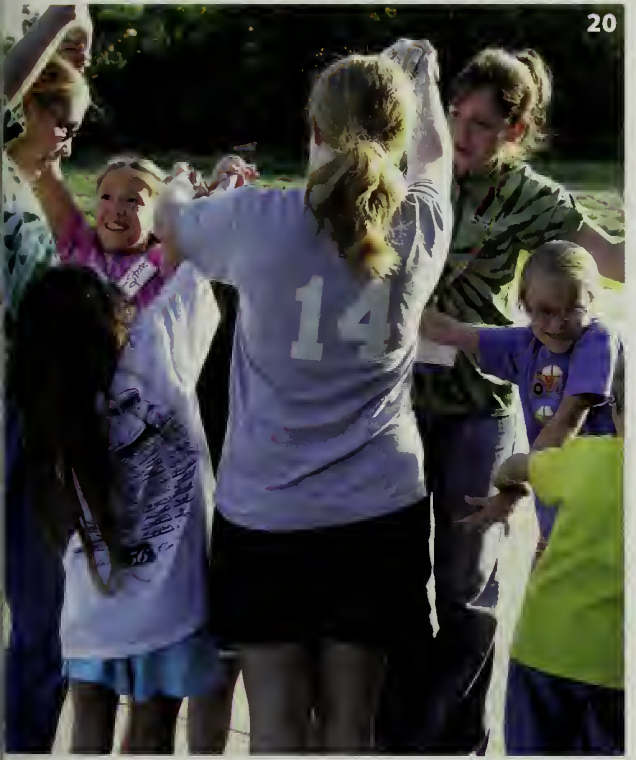

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Stuckey was a pastor's pastor

Re "Anne Stuckey, Pastor and Writer, Dies at 54" (News Digest, June 19): What do Anne Stuckey and Will Rogers have in common? Probably nothing, but after Anne's tragic accident, I thought of a quote about Will Rogers. People said he was a cowboy's cowboy, which meant that other men looked up to him for what he could do and say. Anne Stuckey was a pastor's pastor. Other pastors looked to her for leadership and guidance. She was mentor to a lot of people. She could do all this and then she could minister to someone like me—just a common puncher. It was a real privilege to have her for a friend.—*Lynn Cowboy Short, Archbold, Ohio*

Christian faith and Islam

The article entitled "Three Journeys," by David Shenk (June 5) was excellent. Shenk was in our area a couple of months ago to talk about Islam. His writing in *The Mennonite* was educational, inspirational and powerful. Thanks so much for your great work of covering themes that are so important in today's world.—*Jerry Roth, Chambersburg, Pa.*

We have the best missional resources

I am a retired Mennonite pastor and supportive of our emphasis on being a missional church. I serve with Oregon Mennonite Residential Services (under Mennonite Central Committee West Coast) that provides homes for people with developmental disabilities. My role is to contact pastors to match churches with our homes for volunteers to relate to our residents.

I met a Covenant pastor serving in a Presbyterian church. He learned about Mennonites while a student at George Fox University, a Friends school in Oregon. He said, "Mennonites have the best missional resources on the market."

While early on we struggled with defining the word, here is a person who affirmed us and our great resources warmly. Let us take heart and be affirmed.—*John Willems, Albany, Ore.*

IN THIS ISSUE

After previewing the book based on Mennonite Member Profile 2006, John D. Roth has some pointed words for Mennonite Church USA leaders (page 11). Noting that our denomination is aging and shrinking (with weakening commitments to personal evangelism and historic peace convictions), Roth says, "Church leaders likely will be tempted to focus on the few rays of positive news—the numerical growth among 'Racial/Ethnic' Mennonite congregations, for example, or the relatively low divorce rates among Mennonites—fearing that open conversation about these larger trajectories will create a public relations fallout or only exacerbate the problem." J. Nelson Kraybill, who offers a fresh perspective on the kind of peace Jesus offers, also has some pointed words (page 8). "We who work for peace today, while addressing the arrogance of a 'Christian' empire, may be tempted to build altars to our own programs and accomplishments," Kraybill says.—*Editor*

Grace and truth

About a year ago I was saddened to read a Readers Say letter from someone with an ethnic Mennonite-sounding name that revealed his bent or bias. It soon became evident that he was not speaking to the issue of sound, biblical theology but from a conservative vs. liberal mindset, then equating one of those positions as being the true Christian, Mennonite belief system. That proved to me once again that many Christians in America have been manipulated and distorted by the media and political parties. Few of us seek to frame today's problems from God's perspective—to which most Christians give at least tacit approval—but rather to which political agenda we give our loyalty. The secular world has manipulated Christians as well as pagans in ascribing loyalty to political parties rather than our first and foremost allegiance to the one we call Lord.

I recently discovered a great little book that speaks to this problem of our being polarized as liberals and conservatives. If you pride yourself in being either one, let me suggest that you read this book to see if you are truly following Jesus' example or whether you are a pawn of a political party. All political parties spout platitudes that sound good to different parts of our society, but none is espousing and following completely Jesus as a role model.

The book that speaks to our current dilemma is *The Grace and Truth Paradox* by Randy Alcorn. To quote the back cover: "Truth without grace breeds self-righteousness and crushing legalism. Grace without truth breeds deception and moral compromise."

He has certainly grasped the true biblical message when he discovers a short but profound verse in John 1:14 and tells us in effect: There is no paradox because neither grace nor truth alone has all the answers. John tells us that in Jesus (the Word) was grace and truth. Yet one political party touts grace, while the other touts truth.

When you read this book you will recognize which side of the saddle I tend to fall. This book can begin to heal our church's deep division if we adhere to its teaching.—*Wilmer Sprunger, Berne, Ind.*

Ad for anti-Semitic organization unchristian

Last evening I noticed an ad placed in the June 19 issue (page 27) by Good Information Advocates. A similar ad appeared in the classified section of *Mennonite Weekly Review* (June 18, page 22). I find it disturbing that this group is allowed again to place an ad about an alternate meeting they are hosting concurrent with our San José Assembly. I say "again" because this happened in 2005 in relation to the Charlotte Assembly.

This group is anti-Semitic, and some of the meeting's participants have associated with racist organizations. It is unchristian, an act of pandering to racists and anti-Semites, to allow these people to promote their events in our church periodicals. *—Bonnie Bergey, Souderton, Pa.*

Connecting families weekend

A bit of history may be helpful in understanding the Connecting Families (Readers Say, May 15). About 25 years ago, the Coordinating Council of Region V in the Mennonite Church became aware of the need for someone in the church to listen to the concerns of the gays and lesbians in their region. As one of the council's last acts, it appointed a few people to be a listening committee and referred follow up to the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries.

We asked what the gay attendees at Bethlehem '83 wanted. The answer came quickly: Do something for our families. They don't understand us, and they are being hurt. This simple request led to a series of retreats held for the benefit of parents and siblings of gay-oriented people.

I was present at the last of the retreats sponsored by this first listening committee. The attendees soon asked when they could talk to each other. It became apparent that some parents had never talked with other parents of gay children. Stories needed to be told, tears to be shed, hurts to be healed, confidence to be restored. One of the best ways to overcome negative feelings about themselves and their children was through parent-to-parent conversation.

That retreat encouraged the families to organize and make themselves available to other families suffering the pain they had suffered. They chose leaders and became known as Connecting Families. They seek to connect with and be helpful to other families with a gay or lesbian child.

In my 57 years of ministry I never felt more like Jesus than when listening to those to whom much of the church had turned a deaf ear. I urge *The Mennonite* to open channels of communication so that the healing ministry of Connecting Families can be known, accepted and blessed.*—Martin Lehman, Sarasota, Fla.*

The legacy of CPS

You did well to feature "The Legacy of CPS," and Ted Grimsrud was the one to write it. I am sorry your illustrator did not find the names of the individuals used to illustrate the article. The omission of these names blunts the journalistic impact of the illustrations. The man in the left back row of the cover illustration is H. Ralph Hernley, who was director of the Sideling Hill camp along the Pennsylvania Turnpike.*—Daniel Hertzler, Scottdale, Pa.*

Pastors

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ONLINE POLL RESULTS

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- ○ With family and friends (24%)
- ○ With San José 2007 activities (20%)
- ○ No special observation (41%)
- ○ Not sure (5%)

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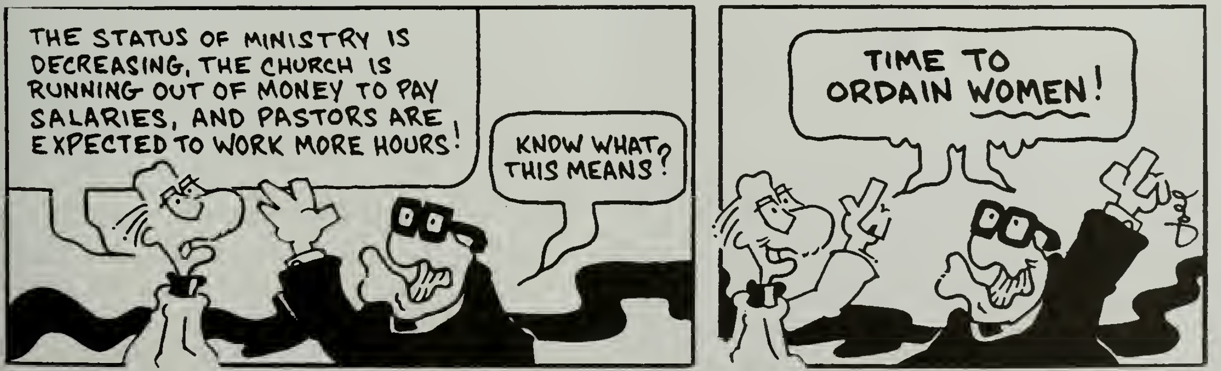
Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


THE STATUS OF MINISTRY IS DECREASING, THE CHURCH IS RUNNING OUT OF MONEY TO PAY SALARIES, AND PASTORS ARE EXPECTED TO WORK MORE HOURS!
KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS?
TIME TO ORDAIN WOMEN!

IN BRIEF

LMS, Christopher Dock, hold graduations

At Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School's 65th commencement June 2, Rolando Santiago, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee U.S., challenged the 213 graduates to "cultivate your heart to engage a world that hungers for God's shalom." Santiago said cultivating one's heart involves identifying life goals or "listening to what God requires of each of us, to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God." A second ingredient for nurturing one's heart, he said, is joining a community of learning such as a church congregation or small group. John D. Roth, a professor of history at Goshen (Ind.) College, addressed 102 graduates at Christopher Dock's 52nd annual commencement June 9 on "Be Strong and Courageous." Lauren Elizabeth Derstine and Benjamin Philip Bergey received the Christopher Dock Award, the highest award presented by the school. It goes to one senior boy and girl in recognition of all-around campus citizenship, leadership and scholarship during high school. Award winners are chosen by the faculty. Lauren is the daughter of John and Sheryl Derstine, Blooming Glen. Benjamin is the son of Philip and Evon Bergey, Perkasie. *—LMS and Christopher Dock*

Lancaster church ordains Elizabeth Nissley

LANCASTER, Pa.—More than 380 people gathered June 24 at James Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, for the ordination of Elizabeth Nissley, associate pastor at James Street.

Lancaster Mennonite Conference (LMC) does not allow the ordination of women for ministry.

In 1993, Nissley was licensed by LMC to serve in the Mount Joy (Pa.) Mennonite Church. In 2002, she began serving as associate pastor at the James Street congregation.

The ordination credentials for Kathy Keener Schantz, also an associate pastor at James Street, were also transferred from Pacific Southwest Conference to LMC.

"Today is certainly a day for celebration … we are not alone," said Jane Peifer Hoober, pastor at Blossom Hill Mennonite Church, in her sermon during the service.

LMC will not officially recognize the ordination of Nissley.—*Anna Groff*

Break-in at Justapaz office raises fears

AKRON, Pa.—A June 14 break-in at Justapaz, a ministry of the Colombian Mennonite Church and a partner of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), raises concerns about the safety of church leaders and members involved in human rights and peace work in Colombia.

During the early morning break-in at the Justapaz office in Bogotá, two computers with information about programs helping document human rights abuses and coordinate peace work in Colombia were stolen. These are joint programs of Justapaz and the Justice and Peace ministry of the Colombian Evangelical Council of Churches. Also, the desk of a staff member who coordinates a human rights protection program was searched.

Nine other computers, an office safe and a fax machine were untouched. Justapaz staff feel the break-in was aimed specifically at the information the office has been collecting about human rights abuses against members of Colombia's churches.

One of the computers belonged to MCC worker Janna Hunter-Bowman and had a database of testimony about human rights abuses against members of Colombia's Protestant churches, as well as profiles of churches' courageous peace ministries.

The first report of the documentation project that Hunter-Bowman helps lead, "A Prophetic Call: Colombian Protestant Churches Document Their Suffering and Their Hope," documents details of 29 assassinations of men, women and children linked to congregations, 84 cases of people forced to flee their homes, 21 civilian combat-related injuries, four arbitrary detentions and other human rights violations.

Justapaz director Jenny Neme says she's concerned the information in the computers will be used to intimidate, silence or harm the victims, local churches and people in the regions gathering the information named in the computers' files.

The attack occurred 12 days after a similar break-in and computer theft in the office of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, which provides international accompaniment to the Peace community of San José de Apartado (which does not allow weapons in its boundaries).

At the request of Justapaz, MCC calls on Anabaptists to pray for peace and safety for those impacted by violence in Colombia and those involved in the work of telling their stories. Justapaz also requests prayers that those responsible for the break-in will turn themselves in, repair the damage and change their lives.

Justapaz, CPT and the MCC Washington Office are asking U.S. residents to contact their members of Congress to express their concern about the theft of sensitive information about human rights abuses and peace work and to urge the State Department to encourage Colombian authorities to take all appropriate steps to identify and arrest those responsible for the break-in.

To learn more about how to respond, go to mcc.org/us/washington.—*MCC and CPT*

Jim Bishop

Festival brings musicians Bach for more

Mark Hartman (left), now teaching in Iowa, and colleague Philip Stoltzfus, Northfield, Minn., rehearse the Bach "Orchestral Suite." They return to Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., every year to play in the Bach Festival orchestra.—*EMU*

Youth Ministry Council meets in Hesston

HESSTON, Kan.—Intergenerational ministry and better Bible teaching topped the list of crucial issues facing Mennonite youth ministry and the wider church when 29 youth leaders gathered at

Virginia Lepp

fun break in Burkina Faso

kou Gansonré (right) and Solomon Ouedraogo take part in elay race in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, a break from the verty and harsh realities of living in families affected by HIV AIDS. Each month, as adults with AIDS or HIV meet in a urch for a time of worship, testimony, prayer and mutual pport, children sing and have fun, part of an effort support- by Mennonite Central Committee's Global Family program. e project, carried out with the AIDS Action Committee of e Assemblies of God church, began in March.—*MCC*

Hesston College for the annual Mennonite Church Youth Ministry Council May 14-17 to discuss youth ministry in Canada and the United States.

Shana Peachey Boshart, conference youth minister for Central Plains Conference of Mennonite Church USA, led the group in discovering these and other issues. The process was unique in that all the agenda for the meetings rose up from within the group.

Central to the discussion was the dilemma of the typical youth ministry structure that many congregations use. Merle Hostetler of Indiana-Michigan Conference said, "We expect [youth] to be involved in the general congregational life on a long-term basis, yet we don't set them up for that at all. The very thing we've created may cause more harm than good."

Mentoring is one answer but not the cure-all. "Being asked to be a mentor is scary," said Joy Cotchen of Allegheny Conference. The group also noted the importance of naming the stereotypes that the generations have of each other. "We need to work at seeing the youth as givers and not just receivers," said Jill Swiers of Pacific Northwest Conference.

Understanding the Bible and Anabaptist theology emerged as other crucial needs for Mennonite youth. "All ages struggle with knowing the Bible—not just the youth," said Scott Benner of Eastern District Conference.

The group grappled with problems all generations face today—busy lifestyles, learning how to filter and analyze electronic media and finding quiet time to reflect.

The group included conference youth ministers from Canada and the United States and churchwide agency staff whose jobs interface with youth ministry. Represented were 15 conferences, Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Camping Association, Mennonite Publishing Network, Mennonite Education Agency, *With* magazine, Mennonite Youth Convention, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Elkhart, Ind.), Eastern Mennonite Seminary (Harrisonburg, Va.), Bethel College (North Newton, Kan.) and Hesston (Ks.) College. Anna Rehan represented Mennonite Church Canada Formation, and Diane Zaerr Brenneman represented Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership.—*Michele Hershberger*

Harold P. Dyck, business, political leader, dies

HESSTON, KAN.—Harold P. Dyck, 86, died May 29, leaving a legacy that will continue to grow—the Dyck Arboretum of the Plains—in Hesston.

He grew up on a farm in a Holdeman Mennonite family, the oldest child of Jacob and Fannie Elizabeth (Yost) Dyck. He married Elva Mae Hershberger on Sept. 19, 1942. They moved to South Dakota and Pennsylvania, where Harold served in Civilian Public Service.

Dyck was sales manager and vice president of Hesston Corporation (now AGCO), mayor of Hesston from 1969 to 1971 and served 18 years in the Kansas State House of Representatives. He helped establish the Mennonite Foundation in Hesston and volunteered more than 20 years as its regional manager and estate planner.

He was a member of Hesston Mennonite Church and of various boards, including Mennonite Publishing House.

He is survived by his wife and their children, Gary, Joycelyn Cooley, Tom and Julia Roupp, 11 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.
—*Susan Balzer*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

IN BRIEF

3 minutes doing nothing

An Anglican bishop has asked thousands of British rail commuters to spend a few minutes daily doing nothing. To help them keep track of the three minutes of idleness he was urging on them, Bishop Stephen Cottrell of Reading handed out miniature egg timers to travelers June 4 as they rushed by him at the train station. He urged travelers to "take three minutes of silence a day to transform your life," which he said could lead to "an adventure of self-discovery and creativity." The cleric took his cue from a recent study by Britain's University of Hertfordshire that found the walking speeds in 32 cities around the world had increased by 10 percent over the past decade.—*National Catholic Reporter*

16 gallons of oil

Sixteen gallons of oil is how much the average U.S. soldier in Iraq and Afghanistan consumes on a daily basis—either directly, through the use of Humvees, tanks, trucks and helicopters, or indirectly, by calling in air strikes. Multiply this figure by 162,000 soldiers in Iraq, 24,000 in Afghanistan and 30,000 in the surrounding region (including sailors aboard U.S. warships in the Persian Gulf) and you arrive at approximately 3.5 million gallons of oil: the daily petroleum tab for U.S. combat operations in the Middle East war zone.
—*TomDispatch.com*

And on earth peace

by J. Nelson Kraybill

Angels at Bethlehem were not the first to say, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace." A few years before the birth of Jesus, an Altar of Peace ("Ara Pacis") in Rome announced the same about Caesar Augustus. Competing claims of peace-though-Jesus and peace-through-the-emperor forced early Christians to make decisions about their allegiance. Understanding this struggle of the first century may help 21st-century followers of Jesus discern our loyalties today.

A new museum opened this year in Italy, featuring the ancient Altar of Peace. Completed in 9 B.C., the Roman Senate authorized the altar to celebrate Caesar's return to Rome after successful military campaigns in Gaul and Spain. With his mission accomplished, Caesar had brought peace and stability to the world.

The propaganda of empire: The Altar of Peace in Rome

Jesus, not Caesar, is Lord and Savior and brings true peace.

Made of gleaming marble, the Altar of Peace disappeared from history in ancient times. Some parts were recovered in the 16th century. But not until 1938, when Italian dictator Benito Mussolini wanted the ancient altar to garnish his own imperial pretense, did archeologists put all known pieces back together.

Caesar and Jesus both bring "peace": Angels brought shepherds the good news ("euangelion") that Jesus, the "Savior who is Christ the Lord," would bring "peace and goodwill among people." The word Luke uses for good news is one we often translate "gospel" or "evangel." In the ancient world, this was a familiar term describing good news brought to a people by the generosity and wisdom of a ruler.

In the ancient world, "gospel" was a familiar term describing good news brought to a people by the generosity and wisdom of a ruler.

The provincial government of Asia (modern western Turkey) issued its own proclamation to honor Augustus in 9 B.C., saying the emperor was a "benefaction to all humanity." Providence had smiled on mortals by "sending to us and to those after us a savior who put an end to war and brought order to all things." In its most sweeping claim, the proclamation said, "The birth of the god [Augustus] was the beginning of good tidings (euangelion) to the world."

Praises of Caesar (in the first paragraph) remind us of later Christian claims about Jesus. Augustus brought "gospel" ("euangelion") to "all humanity." He was a "god" and "savior" who "put an end to war." Luke may have had these parallels in mind, because he begins his story of Jesus' birth by saying a decree "went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered" (Luke 2:1). By the end of the book of Acts, Luke shows how the good news of peace through Christ was set to reach all the world.

Paul, too, advanced the theme of global reconciliation. Jesus "came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near" (Ephesians 2:17). No mere provincial deity, Jesus "is the image of the invisible God. … He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:15-17). Through Jesus, "God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things … by making peace through the blood of his cross" (Colossians 1:20).

Propaganda on the Altar of Peace: Now protected in its own glittering museum, the Altar of Peace displays the propaganda of empire. Relief sculptures on the front of the altar depict scenes from the founding of Rome. The sides show Caesar Augustus and his entourage in procession toward sacrifice to the gods.

The back of the altar features the female figure of Peace. With her lap full of fruit, Peace holds two children, perhaps nephews of Caesar who were heirs to his throne. To the viewer's left is Sky, seated on a bird. To the right is Earth, resting on a sea monster. Situated between Sky and Earth, Peace appears to have united heaven and earth. At the feet of Peace are domesticated beasts, giving a "peaceable kingdom" aura to the scene.

Opposite Peace on the back of the altar is the female goddess Roma, the personification of Rome. Although little of this original sculpture survives, archeologists readily can sketch in the likeness of Roma because her image was so common in the ancient world.

Roma embodies the military power of the Roman Empire. With sword in hand, she sits proudly on a pile of armaments. In some representations Roma is seductive, with a breast exposed. By pairing martial Roma with domestic Peace, the altar captures the essence of empire: Pax Romana (the "Peace of Rome") really is pacification, enforced by the threat and use of arms. Even the original location of the ancient altar—on the Field of War, where the army conducted exercises—revealed the true base of Caesar's "peace."

Contrasting Caesar and Jesus: Shortly before his death in A.D. 14, Caesar Augustus wrote a lengthy, self-serving list of his accomplishments. Called the "Res Gestae Divi Augusti" ("Deeds of the Divine Augustus"), the text was carved into monuments across the empire. "I often waged war, civil and foreign, on the earth and sea, in the whole wide world," he boasts. "I restored peace to the sea from pirates. … I restored peace to the provinces of Gaul and Spain, likewise Germany. … I brought peace to the Alps." Caesar insists there was "no unjust war waged against any nation," a claim still made by empires today.

Another Prince of Peace was nearing adulthood when Caesar Augustus penned these lines. The

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An activist agenda and a political platform may grow out of lives transformed by Jesus, but they can never replace the cross itself for saving power.

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contrast between Caesar and Jesus could not be more vivid. Caesar held total arbitrary power over much of the known world; Jesus died on a cross, a form of execution reserved for losers who threatened or defied Rome. Caesar had wealth, status and glory; Jesus was an obscure peasant. Caesar relied on weapons to enforce his peace; Jesus offered love and forgiveness even to enemies.

But language attached to these two contemporaries is strikingly similar. Both were called lord, almighty and savior. Both were worshiped as divine. Both were acclaimed for bringing the gospel of peace, for bridging heaven and earth.

Early Christians were not fooled by Caesar's use of peace propaganda to justify empire. Some followers of Jesus saw demonic forces at the heart of Rome. The author of Revelation calls Rome "Babylon," identifies her empire as a "beast" and portrays Roma as a harlot. The counsel for Christians in Revelation is to "come out of" Babylon (18:4) and claim citizenship in the New Jerusalem along with other followers of the Lamb. Early Christians believed God was intervening in history both to transform individuals through the blood of the Christ and to shape a new humanity of people who call Jesus Lord.

Choosing allegiance today: North American Christians know what it is to live at the heart of empire. We have an added layer of challenge in determining our allegiance, because today even the violence and greed of empire can be swathed in the language of Christian faith. Surely this grieves God as much as claims to divinity by ancient emperors.

Perhaps it also grieves God when followers of Jesus work for peace without pointing others to the Prince of Peace. An activist agenda and a political platform may grow out of lives transformed by Jesus, but they can never replace the cross itself for saving power. The Roman Senate thought Caesar himself had saved the world and celebrated with an Altar of Peace. We who work for peace today, while addressing the arrogance of a "Christian" empire, may be tempted to build altars to our own programs and accomplishments.

"I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified," Paul wrote (1 Corinthians 2:2). At the heart of the Christian gospel is the paradox of peace through suffering love on a Roman cross. Enduring hope comes through the death and resurrection of Jesus, through a people who reject the hollow promises of empire, who are transformed and sent into the world by the same power that raised Christ from the dead.

J. Nelson Kraybill is president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. He and Ellen, his wife, led a tour last year to Patmos, Rome and the cities of Revelation.

Panel from an ivory casket: the Crucifixion of Christ (Late Roman, AD 420-30. Probably made in Rome.)

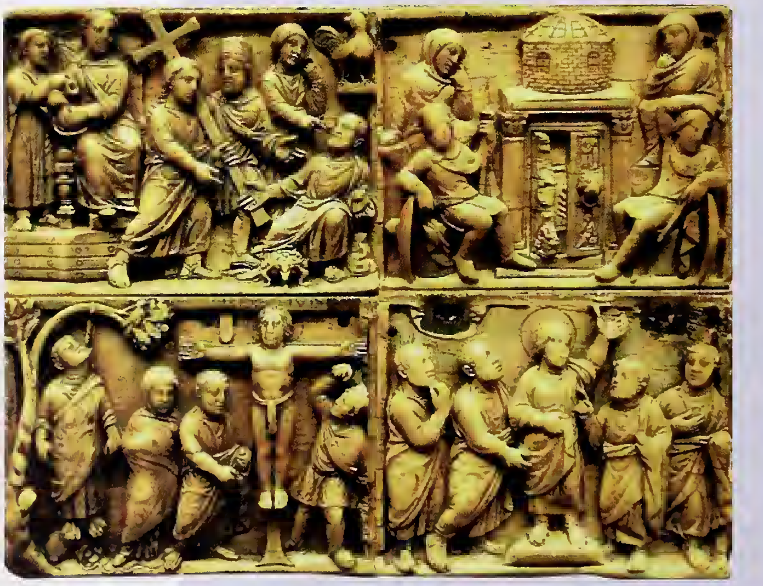

Photo: FreeStockPhotos.com

This plaque is one of four, which though now separated, must originally have been mounted on the four sides of a small square casket. Each is carved with scenes from Christ's Passion. The other panels depict Christ carrying the cross, the empty tomb and doubting Thomas.

This is the earliest known narrative portrayal of the Crucifixion. It is combined with another scene of death, the hanging of Judas. The stiff, clothed body of Judas pulls down the branch of a tree and a spilled sack of coins lies at his feet. In contrast, the exposed limbs of Christ appear still vigorous, and he gazes at the viewer, triumphant in death. A plaque over Christ's head is inscribed "Rex Iud[aeorum]" ("King of the Jews"). Mary and John stand in similar poses to the left of the cross, while on the right, Longinus steps from beneath the arm of the cross across the frame into the viewer's space. In the branch of the tree that bends toward Christ, a bird feeds her chicks—a symbol of the life-giving power of his death.

The depth of the carving—almost three-dimensional—and sense of movement in this particular plaque are typical of the continuation of the classical tradition of ivory carving in Rome.
—from www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

The first step toward renewal is for Mennonites to embrace their tradition as a genuine gift.

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Missional & Mennonite

Does Mennonite Church USA have a future?

by John D. Roth

A seismic shift has taken place in the religious landscape of the United States in the last 30 years. With the notable exception of some Baptist and Pentecostal groups, virtually all mainline Protestant denominations in the United States today are struggling to cope with declining numbers, shrinking budgets, aging memberships and a blurring of theological identity among the members who remain. Although most Americans still identify themselves as Christian, they are far less likely to claim loyalty to a denomination.

Mennonites sometimes think of themselves as being "a people apart." Yet the recent findings of a churchwide survey make it clear that attitudes and practices within Mennonite Church USA mirror these broader trends. The data compiled in Conrad Kanagy's *Road Signs for the Journey: A Profile of Mennonite Church USA* (Herald Press, 2007, $12.99) should make all Mennonites sit up and soberly take note. Between 1989 and 2006, for example, membership in Mennonite Church USA has declined by 15 percent, while the average age of members has increased from 49 to 54. Today, one-third of all Mennonite Church USA congregations have fewer than 50 members. Although 88 percent of Mennonites believe "Christians should do all they can to convert all nonbelievers to Christ," only 18 percent do so on a "regular basis." Only 23 percent of Mennonites believe it is "always wrong" to enter the armed forces, and nearly one-third agree that "church denominations do not matter."

In the face of these disturbing statistics, church leaders likely will be tempted to focus on the few rays of positive news—the numerical growth

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among "Racial/Ethnic" Mennonite congregations, for example, or the relatively low divorce rates among Mennonites—fearing that open conversation about these larger trajectories will create a public relations fallout or only exacerbate the problem. But if these sobering trends are to be reversed, we must face the realities head-on.

Missional or Mennonite? Since the creation of Mennonite Church USA in 2001, the primary focus of the denomination's new identity has centered, appropriately, on the challenge to become a "missional" church. Yet in a dozen subtle and not-so-subtle ways, this missional imperative is often pitted against a "Mennonite" identity that many regard as a hindrance to church growth. The result is similar to the story of a man anxiously looking for his keys on a dark night under a street lamp. After joining him in the fruitless search, one weary friend asked exactly where the man was when he noticed that the keys were missing. "I was in the parking lot around the corner," the man said, "but the light is so much better here."

The inclination to move to the light in dark times is the right impulse. But until we focus our search on where the treasure actually resides, it is unlikely our emphasis on the missional church will reverse the trends identified in the most recent Church Member Profile.

In a genuine desire to be missional, many congregations are eager to jettison or suppress anything associated with a distinctively Mennonite identity.

Over the past five years I have been privileged to interact with dozens of Mennonite Church USA congregations and many area conferences, especially in the midwestern and eastern part of the country. In the course of those contacts, a consistent "narrative" has emerged that helps explain some of the data Kanagy has collected. Most of the congregations I have visited are aware that the cultural, genealogical and ethnic markers of traditional Mennonitism have kept them isolated from the local community and impeded their outreach to the unchurched. In a genuine desire to be missional, they are eager to jettison or suppress anything associated with a distinctively Mennonite identity.

As a result, the public face of many congregations is increasingly characterized by a "generic Christianity" that may be summarized as, "Believe in the Bible as the Word of God and accept Jesus Christ into your heart as your Lord and Savior." If we are truly committed to church growth, the argument goes, then Mennonite teachings and practices are best kept hidden.

This argument is flawed. Not only does it ignore the fact that every church—even those claiming to be freed from denominational constraints—is shaped by a distinctive theology, but it also overlooks the way Anabaptist-Mennonite teachings can be a powerful resource for outreach to the unchurched.

Embrace the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition as a gift. Clearly, Mennonites are not the only Christians in God's kingdom. But the good news is that we have been entrusted with a rich theological tradition that is worth sharing with others. The distinctive themes of that tradition are likely familiar to most readers but bear repeating.

To "accept Christ," we have taught, is to become a disciple—to "walk in his steps" in a lifetime journey in which the fruits of the Spirit are made visible in our lives. This journey is not for loners. The gospel includes the gift of a community of fellow travelers who bear witness to God's abundant love through concrete practices of worship, sharing of possessions, mutual accountability and stewardship of resources. Moreover, the love God has shown us must also flow outward to the world—to the whole world, including our enemies—so that they will truly "know we are Christians by our love."

Those committed to the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition have never been perfect, either in their ideals or their practice. But it is a wonderful heritage that should not be allowed to simply fade away. The first step toward renewal is for Mennonites to embrace their tradition as a genuine gift.

Enliven the tradition with the good news of the gospel. Tradition can easily become traditionalism: legalistic habits that result in us worshipping ourselves rather than God. Thus, the second step of renewal calls us to enliven the tradition by rooting it firmly in the good news of the gospel. Our story is worth telling only if it is part of God's larger story.

Sometimes Mennonites have been tempted to reduce discipleship to a joyless exercise of the will.

Yet the gospel reminds us that following Jesus leads to the joyful paradox of a "yoke that is easy and a burden that is light" (Matthew 11:30). As in marriage, Christian commitment and discipline lead to the joy of a rightly ordered life. And this is good news.

Sometimes Mennonites have reduced community to a list of restrictions—all the things we don't do. Yet the gospel invites us to let go of our defensiveness, release our grip on our possessions and admonish and encourage each other in love. And this is good news.

Sometimes Mennonites have reduced nonresistance to a cultural marker that separates us from the world. Yet biblical nonresistance is rooted in the heart of the gospel. We believe Christians should love their enemies because that is exactly how God treated us. In Romans 5:8, Paul reminds us that God loved us while we were still enemies of God. God loved us preemptively, even though we did not deserve it. Christians testify to the marvelous love of God only when they are prepared to extend that same generous love to others, including their enemies. And this good news.

Christian discipleship, the practices of the visible church, a commitment to loving our enemy—all these are not some Mennonite "add on" to the gospel or something we should hide from newcomers because we are afraid it may be a barrier to missions. To the contrary, all these themes point to the heart of the gospel. And they are part of the good news we are called to share with the seeking and the lost.

Extend the tradition by sharing it with others. Finally, Mennonite Church USA will experience renewal only if willing to extend this wonderful tradition as an expression of God's grace; the gift we have received is meant to be given.

In a mass, impersonal culture, the good news of the gospel is that "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14) in the person of Jesus Christ. Christian faith is not an abstract doctrine or a fleeting emotion. It is a joyful way of life that finds expression in concrete practices of faithful discipleship.

In an individualistic culture, the good news of the gospel is that you are not alone. You can be part of a story as old as creation itself of a God who has acted in history, who knows your name and wants you to take your place in an unfolding drama. You can be part of a community of people who love and care for you, who laugh and cry with you, who ask you to share your gifts and call you gently to account when you falter along the way.

In a culture addicted to consumerism and violence, the good news of the gospel is that you can be freed from the burden of defending yourself and your possessions. You can discover the beauty of a life lived in vulnerability, simplicity and love.

In *Cecelia's Sin*, Will Campbell, a Baptist minister shaped by the Anabaptist tradition, tells a fictional story of a Dutch Anabaptist woman living in the 16th century. As she witnessed dozens of her friends being captured, tortured and killed for their faith, Cecelia resolved to write down the accounts of the martyrs so that later generations would remember their witness. As word of her project circulated, the authorities resolved to track her down in order to destroy the manuscript. Cecelia, in turn, became obsessed with the challenge of protecting and preserving the story. At the end, *Cecelia's Sin* takes a strange and haunting turn. Cecelia has a revelation. In the last scene, she sits by the fire, burning the manuscript page by page.

Cecelia's sin was that her desire to preserve the story had become the story. If the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition is to survive another generation, it will not be because of our hard work in preserving the story in museums, textbooks or information centers. The story will live on only if it is a living response to the call of Christ—a joy-filled response that includes our whole being.

In an individualistic culture, the good news of the gospel is that you are not alone. You can be part of a story as old as creation itself.

The Mennonite church has been entrusted with a wonderful gift. If we are to be good stewards of what God has given us, then we need to be more intentional about embracing our tradition as a gift, anchoring that tradition in the good news of the gospel and extending that tradition to a world desperately hungry for good news.

John D. Roth teaches history at Goshen (Ind.) College and is a member of Berkey Avenue Mennonite Church in Goshen.

Not jus

Creating a culture of call for all God's children

You have been called to follow Christ. Just as Jesus called disciples and the Spirit called Paul at Damascus, everyone hearing the gospel has a call to follow and serve Jesus. Most Christians agree with these two sentences. In the Bible there are many ordinary uses of the word "call," such as to request to come or to give someone a name. A special use of the word refers to the Spirit's or God's encouraging us to follow Jesus.

Here are examples: "For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness" (1 Thessalonians 4:7). "To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours" (1 Corinthians 1:2). "Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more eager to confirm your call and election, for if you do this, you will never stumble" (2 Peter 1:10).

Paul's lists of qualification for ministry do not include having a call.

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We are all called to become Christ's followers. Our call includes doing as Jesus' disciples did, whether holding the baskets to collect the leftovers after the feeding of the 5,000, going to the village for food while Jesus talks to a woman of Samaria or going out with the 72 to spread the gospel. As Paul was called to take the gospel to the Gentiles, our call also includes making tents while taking the gospel to all people.

Two experiences prompted my interest in the uses of the word call. During a time of leadership transition in our small church, the conference minister asked me if I had a call to serve the church. After thinking about the question, I said, "I have not identified within myself a leading of the Spirit to the pulpit ministry." He asked no further questions about my call to serve God, even though I was wondering how I could best serve God in the church. Later, a young man was asked to begin pastoral leadership in our congregation. We were discussing some issue, and he said his views should have greater weight because he had been "called." A friend later reminded me that Paul's lists of qualification for ministry do not include having a call.

Historical shifts of the past century (status and difficulties of church workers, a shift away from use of the lot, perhaps opening the pastorate to women and probably other factors) have affected drawing young people to church work. Mennonite Church USA has begun a program to address our concern over the lack of candidates for pastoral office. The "Culture of Call" initiative encourages people with pastoral and administrative skills to consider church ministry, usually on a full-time basis. This initiative encourages congregations to speak to young people about developing their gifts and serving the church. Almost always, people experiencing a call in this sense are already Christians. What is the origin of the use of the word call to mean a special leading of the Spirit to service and leadership in the church?

In some of the reports of Jesus inviting the first disciples to follow him the Gospel writers use the word call. In the salutation of two letters Paul refers to himself as being called to be an apostle: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God" (Romans 1:1). "Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God" (1 Corinthians 1:1).

Are these references to Paul's Damascus Road experience? Was that a conversion experience, a

for preachers

by David Alleman

vocation change invitation or both? Prior to his call, was he a follower of Christ? In discussing the office of elder/bishop/overseer and deacons, Paul does not list call as one of the qualifications. These servants of the church certainly had a call that led to their salvation. One passage includes both the word call and speaks of church offices: "I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (Ephesians 4:1).

The writer does not use the word call when speaking of God's gift of prophets, teachers, pastors and evangelists to the church. Is the pattern of use of the word call in the New Testament reflected in our use today?

The probable origin of the use of the word call for full-time church workers is the development of a two-tiered spirituality after the establishment of the state church under Constantine. According to this tradition, Jesus had a special spiritual vocation/calling as Messiah. Since it was his vocation to suffer and die, the events of his life are not a norm or example for us to follow.

Some Christians, like Jesus, have a "spiritual" rather than a temporal or secular vocation and receive a special "call." These are the people who become priests and nuns. The laity did not need to follow Christ closely in spirituality, direction for Christian service or service in the military. Priests were expected to be pacifists, but lay Christians were not. At the time of the Reformation, some claimed that only the ordained were called and part of the church. Taking issue with this separation of life into secular and spiritual, Anabaptists sought to recover the sense of following Christ in all our lives. They insisted that those called were to follow Christ in churchly activities, work and all our daily lives.*

The word call identifies the leading of the Spirit, the thinking of the individual and counseling by other Christians toward individuals considering full-time work in the church, especially the pastorate. This term generally is not used for those considering other careers or occupations. Does this focus place unnecessary stresses both on those considering church work and on those considering secular jobs? For those with gifts and skills suitable for the pastorate or full-time church work, there is pressure to expect a high intensity and memorable experience (probably datable) of the Spirit's leading to full-time church work. On the other hand, devout followers of Christ seeking the leading of the Spirit for work direction or job change who desire to serve God in their work and in their nonvocational time may wonder how God leads them differently.

Does using the impetus of the concept of call accomplish in a scripturally sound way the important job of encouraging individuals into missionary or pastoral positions? If we used call in the scriptural sense for people entering "secular" work, would they better understanding that all work is a way of serving Christ?

God's call comes to all people. Those who respond are called to salvation and a life of serving God.

How do we find ways of encouraging and aiding people making decisions about their life's work? Initial career choice or later changes are milestones at which Christians should support one another. Finding a job in which to honor and glorify God requires the Spirit's leading within us as well. To cooperate with the Spirit's leading and to work with the Spirit in aiding all Christians in career choice, we should affirm the following:

1. Serving the church is an important responsibility of all Christians.
2. Serving Christ in one's vocation is part of every Christian's calling.
3. Encouraging fellow Christians to make the best use of their gifts is an important task for the people of God.
4. Challenging jobs such as the full-time pastorate or outreach in difficult areas may require encouragement from others, and extra prayer and courage by the one making the choice.

God's call comes to all people. Those who respond are called to salvation and a life of serving God. Let those who answer God's call live all their life in response to the call.

*Mennonite polity for ministerial leadership mostly uses call in the specific/secondary sense and defines call only in that sense in the glossary. The Mennonite Encyclopedia article "Ministers, Call of" does not specifically consider the biblical use of the word call.

David Alleman is a member of Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Dreamstime.com

I knew what lay ahead: six minutes of all-out effort that would tax all my physical and mental energy.

Wrestling with God

by Gordon Houser

My opponent, who outweighed me by 15 pounds, pressed my face against the blue mat. The smell of sweat and plastic filled my nostrils. My muscles ached, burned with lactic acid. My arms trembled with fatigue as I tried to lift myself. My opponent slipped his arm under mine and sought my neck in a half-nelson. I had only to stay off my back to keep the match tied. At my limits, I thought, yet I somehow mustered enough strength and willpower to force down his arm with mine and stay on my stomach. Finally, the whistle blew, and the match ended in a draw. I hardly had energy to get up and shake his hand.

Back in the winter of 1967-68, as a ninth grader at Lowther Junior High in Emporia, Kan., I wrestled four matches against boys from other schools. I dreaded each match, wished I could somehow avoid it. I knew what lay ahead: six minutes of all-out effort that would tax all my physical and mental energy. In my final match I could have won by forfeit because my opponent did not make weight (and I wrestled in a weight class higher than what I weighed, thus the 15-pound difference), but my coach said, "Let them wrestle." That I was able to avoid defeat that season had much to do with the fact that my older brothers had wrestled and taught me moves my opponents did not know. I also had some luck and refused to quit.

Associated
Mennonite
Biblical
Seminary

AMBS
window

Summer 2007
Volume 17 Issue 3

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5 Faculty honor graduates

7 Commencement

Taking up the whisk

J. Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president

Just before commencement, AMBS graduate Fred Lesakale of Kenya presented me with a wildebeest-tail fly whisk, a symbol of authority among his Samburu people. "A fly whisk ordinarily is owned by senior (male) members of our community," an attached note said. "Seniority in this case is defined by age (usually old enough to be a grandfather), successful family, and a large number of livestock."

Do chiefs carry the whisk? "We do not have chiefs," Fred said, "we have *elders*. They share authority, and each carries a whisk."

Fred's comments about shared leadership resonated in my mind as 39 gifted men and women received diplomas. A seminary, in effect, receives a fly whisk to educate and mentor those who lead.

But a seminary cannot prepare leaders alone. Every conference and congregation must make certain that those with the gift and call for leadership have mentors, education and opportunity to grow. Pastors, elders, conference ministers and denominational leaders each carry a whisk.

Recently a room full of such people from across the church gathered at a "Follow the Fire" event to imagine scenarios for the role of AMBS in years ahead. We pondered big challenges. The Mennonite church is more culturally and theologically diverse than ever. Except for the burgeoning racial/ethnic sector, the denomination is in numerical decline. More potential students want seminary training that allows them to live at home. The world yearns for the hope, reconciliation and community Mennonites enjoy.

We called the scenario-planning "Follow the Fire," because the God of Exodus and Pentecost will need to lead the way. Renewal for seminary and denomination will issue from repentance, worship and a deep sense of call.

(continued on page 3)

Mary E. Klassen

Fred Lesakale, who received a Master of Arts: Peace Studies degree on May 19, gave Nelson Kraybill a fly whisk, a symbol of authority among his Samburu people in Kenya.

2007 Graduates

Thirty-nine earn degrees and certificates

Thirty-nine students graduated from AMBS on May 19, 2007. Graduates completed these programs of study to receive degrees or certificates:

MDiv	Master of Divinity
MAPS	Master of Arts: Peace Studies
MATS	Master of Arts: Theological Studies
MACF	Master of Arts in Christian Formation
Cert	Certificate in Theological Studies

Find out more about the graduates here and at the AMBS web site: www.ambs.edu.

Andy Alexis-Baker (not pictured) MATS with a concentration in Theology and Ethics. Will pursue a Ph.D. and work with Ted Koontz, editing John Howard Yoder's lectures on Christian attitudes to war, peace and revolution. Andy is a member of Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship, New York, N.Y. Andy is married to Nekeisha Alexis-Baker.

Kate Becker MATS with a concentration in Theology and Ethics. Will pursue graduate work in the sciences. Kate is a member of Faith Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan. She is the daughter of Bob and Donna Becker, who reside in Newton, Kan.

Alissa Bender MDiv. Will be a pastoral intern at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C., then pursue a pastoral ministry assignment. She is a member of Steinmann Mennonite Church in Baden, Ont., and is the daughter of Robert and Gladys Bender, Baden.

Barbara Cross MACF. Will continue as pastor of South Milford (Ind.) United Methodist Church. Barbara is married to Donald L. Cross.

Randy Detweiler MDiv. Will continue as a member of the pastoral team of Howard-Miami Mennonite Church, Kokomo, Ind. Randy and Joy, his wife, have two children.

Brianne Donaldson MATS with a concentration in Theology and Ethics. Will continue working in the field of muscle therapy and pursue post-graduate work while researching and writing for an associate fellowship at Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics.

LeNora Duerksen MDiv. Pursuing a ministry assignment in pastoral care, visitation and counseling. LeNora is a member of Tabor Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan. She and Londell J. Duerksen, her husband, have three grown children.

Jenifer Eriksen-Morales MDiv. Began working as Minister of Transitional Ministries for Franconia Mennonite Conference on June 1. Jenifer and Victor Morales, her husband, have two children. She is a

Kate Becker, Alissa Bender, Barbara Cross, Randy Detweiler, Brianne Donaldson, LeNora Duerksen

member of Alpha Mennonite Church in Alpha, N.J.

Janet Funk (not pictured) Cert. Lives and works in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Joyce Gackler MDiv. Will continue as pastor of Plainfield United Methodist Church, Grand Rapids, Mich. She and Kenneth Gackler, her husband, have three grown daughters.

Christine Guth MDiv. Will continue as an associate with the Anabaptist Disabilities Network, working on advocacy and education in the areas of disabilities and mental illness. She and Bob, her husband, have two children and are members of Eighth Street Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind. This fall Christine will teach at Goshen College as an adjunct professor in the Bible department.

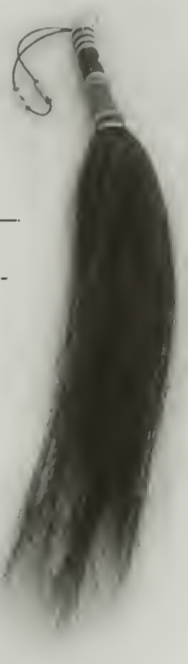
Ruth Harder MDiv. Will begin in August as associate pastor at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan. Ruth is a member of Hillsboro Mennonite Church in Hillsboro, Kan, and is married to Jesse Graber. She is the daughter of alumnus Keith Harder and Judy Harder, Hillsboro, Kan.

Virginia Hartman Cert. Will continue to work as a chaplain and registered nurse at St. Rita's Hospital, Lima, Ohio. Ginny is married to Dwight Hartman and they live in Elida, Ohio.

(continued on page 4)

Taking up the whisk

(continued from page 1)



"Fire" participants—including those not Mennonite—encouraged AMBS to foster a clear Anabaptist identity. The Christian church in North America does not need another generic evangelical seminary. The strength of Anabaptism issues from our commitment both to know Jesus as Savior and Lord *and* to follow Jesus in service and peacemaking.

God is calling AMBS to strengthen new avenues of education—extension sites, courses on location in Spanish, online classes and a denominationally diverse student body. Opportunities abound. But in order to sustain this broad vision, we also must sustain a vibrant worshipping community of face-to-face learning at Elkhart. This summer we thank God for the gift of a new library. We believe God is strengthening the core so AMBS continues to have stamina to serve a diverse, scattered and rapidly-changing church. ●

Jenifer Eriksen-Morales, Joyce Gackler, Christine Guth, Ruth Harder, Virginia Hartman

Charleen Jongejan Harder MDiv. Will be pastor of Valleyview Mennonite Church in London, Ont., with Kendall, her husband, also a 2007 AMBS graduate. She is a member of Toronto United Mennonite Church in Toronto, Ont.

Kendall Jongejan Harder MDiv. Will be pastor of Valleyview Mennonite Church in London, Ont., with Charleen, his wife, also a 2007 AMBS graduate. He is a member of Toronto United Mennonite Church in Toronto, Ont. Kendall is the son of AMBS alumnus Gary Harder and Lydia Harder of Scarborough, Ont.

Lois Kaufmann MACF. Will continue on the pastoral team of Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., with responsibilities focused toward Christian formation and administration. Lois is married to Jim Kaufmann and they have four children.

Gene Kennard (not pictured) MATS with a concentration in Biblical Studies. Will pursue ordination in the Free Methodist Church. Gene is a member of Winona Lake (Ind.) Free Methodist Church.

Juanita Laverty MDiv. Will begin as pastor of Hanover Mennonite Church in Hanover, Ont. Juanita currently is a member of Pioneer Park Christian Fellowship in Kitchener, Ont. She is married to David Sararus, also a 2007 AMBS graduate and they have one son.

Sara Leaman MDiv. Seeking a position as a hospital chaplain. Sara a member of Church Without Walls, Elkhart, Ind.

Aaron Lehman MATS with a concentration in Biblical Studies. Aaron is a member of Waterford Mennonite Church, Ind. He is the son of Chris and Marilyn Lehman, who reside in Albuquerque, N.M., and his fiancée is Anne Albrecht.

Fred Lesakale MAPS. Will return to Kenya and continue working with Wamba Community Development Program, a development agency that focuses on giving children improved health service, suitable education and healthy social interaction. Fred is married to Franca Lesakale.

David Marty MDiv. Will be commissioned as a Probationary Elder in the United Methodist Church and will be pastor of Faith Chapel United Methodist Church near Huntington, Ind. He is married to Mary Marty.

Priscillah Metekai MAPS. Will work for Church World Service in Elkhart, Ind. She is a member of Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen, Ind. She is married to Elijah Metekai and they have one daughter. Priscillah came to the U.S. from Kenya, where she previously studied at Daystar University.

Kendall Jongejan Harder, Charleen Jongejan Harder, Sara Leaman, Juanita Laverty, Lois Kaufmann, Aaron Lehman

Mirnawati Moeljono MATS with a concentraiton in Biblical Studies. Will begin a mission service assignment through West Coast Mennonite Central Committee as a Church Community Worker at Kristus Evangelical Church of Christ in Pomona, Calif. Mirna is a member of Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia in Jepara, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia.

Jean Ness MDiv. Will continue as pastor of the church she is serving, Ligonier United Methodist Church. She is married to Pete Ness and they have three children.

(continued on page 6)

Faculty honor graduates

Recipients of the 2007 faculty awards are:

History and Theology department awards:

Andy Alexis-Baker—C.J. Dyck Church History
Fred Lesakale—J.H. Yoder MAPS
Diane Stone—J.C. Wenger MDiv Theological Studies

Church and Ministry department awards:

Jane Roeschley—MACF
Julie Stegelmann—MACF
Alissa Bender—MDiv
Jean Ness—MDiv
Ryan Siemens—MDiv

Bible department awards:

Christine Guth—Gertrude Roten Greek Exegesis
Charleen Jongejan Harder—Willard M. Swartley New Testament Interpretation
Kendall Jongejan Harder—Millard Lind Old Testament Interpretation
Rachel Siemens—Perry D. Yoder Hebrew Exegesis ●

Mary E. Klassen

Andy Alexis-Baker (right) received the faculty award named after C.J. Dyck, professor emeritus of Anabaptist and Sixteenth Century Studies, and was able to meet C.J. at the AMBS commencement celebration.

Fred Lesakale, David Marty, Priscillah Metakai, Mirnawati Moeljono, Jean Ness

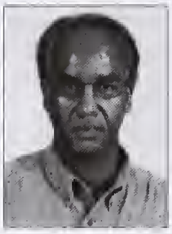
Panorama

Mary E. Klassen

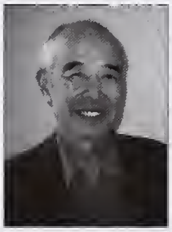
The AMBS library and campus center, completed this summer, will welcome students at the beginning of the fall semester. Dedication of the facility is scheduled for the weekend of April 25–26, 2008, in connection with the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the beginning of AMBS on the Elkhart campus. For more information about plans for the celebration, see <www.ambs.edu/news-and-events/anniversary-dedication>.

Alumni Awards honor peacemaker and poet

Ahmed Haile of Nairobi, Kenya, and Yorifumi Yaguchi, of Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan, are the 2007 recipients of the AMBS Alumni Ministry and Service Award.



Ahmed, who received a MAPS degree in 1989, currently is a peace studies instructor at Daystar University in Nairobi, Kenya. In addition, Ahmed gives leadership to Somali Christians who are studying at the university.



Yorifumi combines an unusual mix of theology, pastoral work and poetry writing. A 1965 B.D. graduate of Goshen Biblical Seminary, Yorifumi was a professor of English poetry and Bible literature at Hokusei Gakuen University in Sapporo for 33 years and edited *Poetry Nippon*, a Japanese magazine of English poems. He also was a pastor of several churches for 40 years.

Ahmed will receive his award at the San José gathering of MC USA in July. Yorifumi will receive his award in November when AMBS President Nelson Kraybill travels to Japan.

Faculty publications, 2006–2007

A list of all the published work by AMBS faculty in the 2006–2007 year is available on the AMBS web site: <www.ambs.edu/news-and-publications/faculty-writings>. The list includes books, articles and book reviews.

New appointments at AMBS

The following are new appointments for AMBS administrators and faculty:

Rebecca Slough: Academic dean

Loren L. Johns: Full-time faculty (formerly academic dean)

Irene Koop: Registrar (formerly director of financial aid)

Robert Rosa: Director of Admissions (formerly dean of student development at Ashland Theological Seminary).

Fifth summer for !Explore

!Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth is in its fifth summer with two groups of 15 higher schoolers participating. To find out about this summer's youth, see <www.ambs.edu/explore>.

To make a gift to !Explore, supporting this program that encourages young people to listen for God's call to ministry, see <www.ambs.edu/explore/gift>.

Updated Speakers Bureau

Information about faculty and administrators who are available to speak to your congregation or other group has been updated on the AMBS web site. Visit <www.ambs.edu/speakersbureau> to see topics and presenters along with information about how the speakers bureau works.

Alumni News

Philip K. Clemens (Bachelor of Divinity 1966) is author of *Beyond the Law: Living the Sermon on the Mount*, published by Herald Press. He is pastor of Pike Mennonite Church, Elida, Ohio.

Keith Graber Miller (Master of Divinity 1988) and **Malinda E. Berry** (Master of Arts: Peace Studies 2000) are authors of *Wrestling with the Text: Young Adult Perspectives on Scripture*, published by Cascadia Publishing House.

Doug and Wanda Roth Amstutz (both Master of Divinity 1996) will serve as country representatives for Mennonite Central Committee in Ethiopia, beginning in July.

Emily Toews (Master of Divinity 2006) has been called as pastor of North Star Mennonite Church, Drake, Sask.

Summer 2007
Volume 17 Issue 3

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor and Designer: Mary E. Klassen
Graduate group photos: Steve Echols

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite*.

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Lessons for men from Jacob's wrestling match in Genesis 32

The story of Jacob wrestling "a man" he later says was God (Genesis 32:22-32) is full of meaning for men today. In this story, Jacob is at a crossroads. He has sent all his possessions across the Jabbok (a play on his name). He is preoccupied with resolving the conflict with his brother Esau, whose blessing he stole.

Jacob is "left alone" (verse 24). Unlike many other sports, in wrestling you are alone on the mat with your opponent. Hearing the crowd around you telling you to get up when you don't feel an ounce of energy left in your body is a lonely, helpless feeling.

Although he has no crowd around him, Jacob feels some urgency to hold on to the man. He refuses to quit. The man even wounds Jacob on the hip (which seems like a cheap shot), but Jacob holds on and demands that the man bless him. The man does bless him, then gives him a new name, Israel, which means "the one who strives with God."

Men tend to be more comfortable relating to the world physically. And while we understand striving to our limits in sports or our work, we usually like to be in control. At least we like to win. But to strive with God, as Jacob's new name implies, leaves us out of control, unable to win and wounded.

From the womb, Jacob was a wrestler. He used deceit to gain advantage over others. But in this story he is overmatched and receives a wound he carries the rest of his life. This wound is a blessing that reminds him of his call: to strive with God.

We men have trouble acknowledging our wounds, especially what is called the "father wound," which refers to the psychological hurt from an absent father. Richard Rohr writes that this can lead to "a life often with the passivity of an unlit fire." Remember that Jacob had been the favorite of his mother but not his father, who preferred Esau.

Men who don't grieve their pain and learn to transform it often transmit it in various ways: addictions, materialism, violence and other ego-driven activities. Look at Jacob's life before his wrestling match. Women, on the other hand, tend to understand grief better because of their natural experience of loss through menstruation, gestation and giving birth, not to mention the oppression many encounter in our society.

When we consider engaging a God who will wound us, we may want to run. It takes courage, a certain strength and a solid faith in God's love to hang in there and hold on until God blesses us.

After my ninth grade year I had dreams of wrestling in high school and vying for a state championship. Instead I received a wound that became a blessing. My back had bothered me since a (heavier) teammate had hurt me in practice. I saw the doctor for my required physical that summer, and he discovered I had a growth deficiency in my lower vertebrae that prevented me from wrestling again.

It takes courage, a certain strength and a solid faith in God's love to hang in there and hold on until God blesses us.

My dream was shattered, but the following spring I had a spiritual experience in which I gave my life to Jesus Christ. Since then I've had other wounds and other spiritual experiences. None of them has been easy or something I look forward to, yet each has drawn me closer to God's face.

Look at Jacob after his encounter with God. He limps to meet his brother Esau, whom he fears will kill him, and they embrace. Jacob becomes Israel, the name for a people called to strive with God.

We, too, are called to strive to our limits and seek God's face. As we wrestle with God, acknowledge and grieve our wounds, we will find healing in our lives and bring healing and hope to those around us.

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite. *This article is excerpted from* Wrestling with God: Devotional Readings for Men. *Copyright © 2007 by Faith & Life Resources, Scottdale, PA 15683. All rights reserved. Used by permission.*

Mennonite and Luddite

Th. Metzger is a member of Rochester (N.Y.) Area Mennonite Fellowship.

I am a Mennonite because of a cookbook. Twenty-seven years ago, my wife and I received the *More-With-Less Cookbook* as a gift, and our life has never been the same. Both covers have fallen off, and there are stains throughout. Yes, we still eat kusherie and Pakistani kima. But far more importantly, we were inspired by the words "simple living" and joined our lives to the Mennonite fellowship in our city.

Doris Janzen Longacre writes in her original introduction that "cutting back sounds like a dismal prospect." But she goes on to say that her goal is to help others live "joyfully, richly and creatively." Reading those words in 1979 inspired my wife and me to ask, Who are these people called Mennonites?

Since then, our world has been swamped by a tsunami of technological development, keeping *More With Less* still vital. As Longacre saw it, overspending and overconsuming are at the heart of the problem. The term "simple living" now feels a bit archaic. And perhaps it was never accurate. It's actually easier to rely on McDonald's, Microsoft and Toyota than to make do creatively with less. Buying a life is always simpler than creating one. Still, Longacre's basic premise is sound. There is such a thing as too much.

Too much electronic distraction, too much trivial information, too much consumption of consumer products, too much smug supersizing of the high-tech environment we live in.

I am a Mennonite. And I am a Luddite, too. Use that word to describe yourself and most North Americans will either shy away or ask, How could such an intelligent, educated person embrace such a ridiculous philosophy? The term "Luddite" is often used as a weapon to belittle or dismiss. The image conjures up the rage-filled, brainless destroyer of technology.

The truth is—as is often the case—the opposite of received cultural wisdom. To be a Luddite is to be thoughtful, to question every technological choice, asking, Do I need this, or do I merely want it because it gives the illusion of convenience? Since the original Luddites (handweavers in 19th-century England) fought back to save their livelihoods, the philosophy has always been misunderstood or purposely slandered by those who benefit financially from development. Simply put, Luddites were real advocates of the more-with-less ideal. Then and now, Luddites look closely at new technologies and reject those that will degrade their quality of life and community.

Whether we're talking about a toothbrush or a nuclear submarine, every new technology shapes the way we look at ourselves and the world. The old saying goes, "To the man with the hammer, everything looks like a nail." Updated, this might read, "To the person looking at the world through a computer screen, everything is fleeting data."

Every new technology shapes the way we look at ourselves and the world.

Does the Internet give us true connection or instant titillation and trivia? And is it worth the human cost? Does the high-tech business environment give us anything more than 60-hour work weeks, better worker surveillance and an increasingly frantic pace? More broadly, I encourage you to ask yourself, Which technologies will control me more than I can control them?

I have heard all the objections to the more-with-less Luddite stance. One cannot leave the house without hearing the rah-rah of the high-tech cheerleaders. And without huge sacrifices (some of which I am too cowardly or weak to make), the Cult of Unthinking Progress infiltrates every aspect of my life.

Still, I hold up my tattered *More With Less* and ask others to consider where their allegiance lies. Christ said you cannot serve two masters. And surely powerful tools can become powerful masters. Christ showed hundreds of times in his life that his allegiance was with the poor, not with the self-satisfied reigning powers. Christ told the young ruler to sell all his possessions. I imagine this would have included his ipod and cell phone.

Have I compromised in some areas? Absolutely. Still, I am convinced that Mennonites will lose something crucial if we continue to blindly embrace the values of the ruling culture around us. Real joy—not its glittering counterfeit. Creativity—not endless entertainment. And God's true richness. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **A special report on San José 2007**

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Peace delegation visits Palestine/Israel

Group will present letter at San José 2007 that calls for church involvement.

After visiting Palestine/Israel May 11-24, a Mennonite Church USA delegation is encouraging the church and its institutions to get involved in the region in ways that provide hope and promote peace.

Noting deteriorating human rights for Palestinians, the delegation's open letter to congregations says the power imbalance of Israelis over Palestinians distorts the lives of everyone living in the region and fails to provide longed-for security. The delegation believes the system of forced segregation and systemic oppression imposed by the Israeli government and the resulting spiral of violence calls for all Mennonites to work collaboratively in the region.

The delegation asks congregations and pastors to learn more about the issues in Palestine and Israel and calls on institutions and individuals to make investment decisions in Israel/Palestine that promote peace and do not support the illegal occupation and the ongoing dispossession of the Palestinian people. The letter encourages agencies to work together to become bridge-builders among alienated factions in the region.

The delegation letter asks congregations to study resources that counter the distortions of land and promise in Christian Zionism and encourages tour groups visiting Palestine/Israel to consider spending part of their time in Palestinian communities such as Bethlehem and Nazareth.

A 30-foot-high separation wall 400 miles long separates many Palestinians from their land. Because the Israeli government is not constructing the wall on the internationally recognized border (the Green Line) but further into occupied West Bank, about 60 Palestinian communities will be trapped between the wall and the border.

Since occupying East Jerusalem and the West Bank in 1967, Israel—in clear violation of international law—has built more than 200 settlements on Palestinian land. A system of roads and checkpoints further isolate Palestinian villages from each other.

"We are seeing a process of squeezing the Palestinians that remain into as small an area as possible," Israeli peace activist Amos Gvirtz told the delegation. He said the Israeli government, in a deliberate fashion, continues to claim more Palestinian land and demolish Palestinian homes, even during the peace process.

Arik Ascherman of Rabbis for Human Rights told the delegation that the steps Israel takes to hold on to its land are making the country morally unfit to own the land. In March 2005, Ascherman was convicted of blocking bulldozers with his body to prevent demolition of the Dari family home in Issawiya, East Jerusalem. The Dari home has been demolished twice by Israeli authorities.

Mennonite Church USA

From left: Rich Meyer, J. Daryl Byler, Mark Regier and Atallah Salem stand by a graffiti wall visited by the Mennonite Church USA delegation to Israel/Palestine.

Standing on the site of the demolition of the Dari home May 14, Rabbi Ascherman asked, "How can I watch the image of God being demolished with this house?" Ascherman said Jews should be God's partners in making a better world. He noted that a recent survey showed that a majority of Jews and Palestinians want peace, but each group believes that the other does not.

"Without blind support from the United States for over 40 years, this occupation could not have worked," said Samia Khoury of Sabeel, a Palestinian Christian theological study center in Jerusalem. The United States provides $3 billion in military aid to Israel each year.

"But we still believe that peace is possible and that Jews, Christians and Muslims can live together," said Cedar Duaybis, also of Sabeel.

Delegation members included representatives from Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Church USA Executive Board and Executive Leadership, MMA [Mennonite Mutual Aid], Christian Peacemaker Teams, Mennonite Economic Development Associates and Mennonite Central Committee U.S. The delegation was formed in response to concerns within the Peace and Justice Partnership Council of Mennonite Church USA that agencies should have a common experience around issues relating to investment policies.

The delegation's letter to congregations urges Christians to rediscover God, as revealed in the Old Testament and in Jesus, as the One whose compassion and care extend to all people—Israelis and Palestinians alike.

The delegation plans to present its letter to delegates at the San José 2007 Delegate Assembly of Mennonite Church USA.—*Mennonite Church USA*

We still believe that peace is possible and that Jews, Christians and Muslims can live together. —Cedar Duaybis

VBS troupe boldly travels to churches

Group of five leads Vacation Bible Schools at Western District congregations.

Melanie Zuercher

From left: Abigail Funk, Cheryl Bartel, Nancy Kaufman and Grant Knoll tie a comforter that will be sent to Greensburg, Kan., a small town devastated by a tornado in early May.

Take a newly retired pastor with a passion for Christian education, a geographically large area conference with many small congregations both rural and urban, and four college students eager to do a summer ministry project. Mix with Mennonite Church USA's Vacation Bible School (VBS) curriculum titled, "Be Bold! God is With You," and what do you have?

Answer: A traveling Bible school troupe that may be the first one for Mennonite Church USA (although it's not a new idea to Canadian Mennonite churches).

The troupe, led by just-retired pastor Norma J. Johnson and going out under the auspices of Western District Conference, began its five-week odyssey with orientation at Faith Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan. The first VBS took place June 3-7 in Hillsboro, Kan., with three congregations—First Mennonite, Trinity Mennonite and Hillsboro United Methodist—joining.

The idea for a traveling VBS troupe developed as Marlene Bogard, Western District Conference librarian, and Johnson brainstormed about Johnson's volunteering post-retirement. On March 31, she concluded 10 years of pastoral ministry at Bethel College Mennonite Church in North Newton, Kan., a position she came to after serving for a decade with the Commission on Education (COE) of the former General Conference Mennonite Church. One of Johnson's roles at BCMC for the past 10 years has been to lead the annual VBS there.

At the same time, Dorothy Nickel Friesen, Western District Conference minister, said she was interested in writing a grant to the Schowalter Foundation for a Christian education project.

All these threads wove with Johnson's knowledge—from her time with COE of traveling VBS troupes in Canada—produced a proposal for just such a troupe in Western District Conference. The Schowalter Foundation liked it and awarded enough money for a stipend for up to five students and one leader for five weeks, along with transportation and materials costs. When the grant was approved last November, Bogard began communicating with WDC churches to ask them to apply to have the troupe come to their VBS (small churches had priority) and sent word out to campus pastors and Christian education faculty at Mennonite colleges and seminaries in the United States, looking for students interested in the opportunity.

These queries drew four students representing three Mennonite colleges and area conferences. Rebecca Claassen, a junior biology major at Bethel College, is from Menno Mennonite Church, Ritzville, Wash. Teresa Hershberger, a junior youth ministry major at Bluffton (Ohio) University, is from Wooster (Ohio) Mennonite Church. Megan Klaassen, a senior English education major at Bethel, is from Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan. Regina Weaver, a sophomore nursing major at Hesston (Kan.) College, is from Blainsport Mennonite Church, Rheinholds, Pa.

Following VBS in Hillsboro, the troupe traveled to Turpin, Okla., for a week with First Mennonite, United Methodist and Church of Christ congregations as well as Calvary Mennonite, Liberal, Kan. June 17-28, they were scheduled in Hammon and Clinton, Okla., and several days as counselors for a junior high camp at the Mennonite-run retreat grounds in Hydro, Okla. July 1-6, they will work with Hispanic Mennonite congregations in Dallas in two locations still to be determined.

The "Be Bold!" curriculum is built on Bible stories and uses 10 interactive "Courage Connection" stations to help children learn to trust God whose message is: Do not be afraid, for I am with you.—*Melanie Zuercher for Western District*

Melanie Zuercher

Megan Klaassen, left, in green shirt, and Regina Weaver, right, in green shirt, play "Games of Courage" with VBS students in Hillsboro, Kan.

Young men choose careers over service

But some serve with Mission Network program despite pressure for 'real job.'

Mark Wasser

Mennonite Voluntary Service worker Jason Rutt does crafts with an English as a Second Language student in La Jara, Colo.

Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) originated during World War II as an alternative to military service for young men. However, since its peak in the 1950s and 1960s, the program has consistently attracted more women than men.

"I suspect one factor is that men have been conditioned more than women in our culture, or at least in our church, to make money and get going with their career," says Phil Bergey, who served in Stratford, Ont., with MVS in 1978-79. "It may also be that women are simply more in touch with their multiple interests and see MVS as a good way to process things."

Over the last 10 years, 64 percent of Mennonite service participants have been women, a figure that is also reflected nationally. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, volunteer rates among women have been consistently higher than men. In 2006, 58 percent of volunteers were women, and only 42 percent were men.

Jeremy Kempf, who recruits young adults for Mennonite Mission Network's Christian Service programs, says men still feel pressure to get a "real job." He notes that the earning potential of men is still considerably higher than that of their female counterparts.

Brad Schlegel, who took time off between college and career to work at a group home, says, "As you get outside Mennonite circles—and even a little within—there isn't a whole lot of understanding. Why would you waste a year by not having a job?"

On the other hand, many young adults are searching for direction after college and end up in service because they aren't sure what else to do, says Tonia Martin, an MVS unit administrator for Mennonite Mission Network.

Randy Miller, a graduate in social work from Goshen (Ind.) College who served in Stratford, Ont., in 1975-76, illustrates this trend.

"I was undecided about my career options," he says. "Service was one way of delaying the decision without doing any harm."

Bergey chose service between high school and college. In 1978, he spent a year doing carpentry for seniors, helping with citywide glass recycling and working in a coffee house for teens.

"College was an obvious option,"Bergey says, "but I didn't have a clear sense of what to pursue. MVS seemed like a good place to sort things out while serving others."

But this is not always the case for young men.

"A lot of guys are very goal-oriented and have grad school in their sights. They want to get some experience," Martin says.

Often, though, career and service are not mutually exclusive. In addition to service experiences, Miller's past occupations include carpentry, family business, serving as a pastor, director of admissions at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind., and now a development associate with Mennonite Mission Network.

"At one point I did service as a way of saying, 'I've paid my dues; now I can do what I want,'" Miller says.

Unlike the tension that Kempf recognizes in the young men he works with today, Miller chose both social work and voluntary service because he felt more pressure from his community to live a simple lifestyle than to have a high-paying occupation.

"I never climbed the corporate ladder … there were too many other ladders to choose from," he says.

What would make this experience more inviting for young men?

One way the church can promote service is by offering financial resources so volunteer programs are available to everyone, says Matt Troyer, a student at AMBS.

Troyer says some parts of the church encouraged service, as seen in his college friends and professors. But he worries that other parts of the church only encourage short-term mission trips without an emphasis on making a lifetime commitment of serving others.

Martin hopes service isn't just another thing to check off the "Mennonite to-do list." She wants to hear people she has worked with say, "My lifestyle of service began in MVS," rather than, "I did service 20 years ago."

If the steady stream of more than 3,600 young adults who have participated in Mission Network's Christian Service programs in the past five years continues, Martin's wish will materialize.—*Bethany Keener and Kristine Bowman of Mennonite Mission Network*

As you get outside Mennonite circles—and even a little within—there isn't a whole lot of understanding. Why would you waste a year by not having a job?—Brad Schlegel

Former MCC director wanted more risks

In 18-month tenure, Davis went from high hopes to frustration with agency.

Robb Davis' legacy at Mennonite Central Committee—an 18-month period he describes as one of unrealized, even frustrated, potential—may be encapsulated in a single photo. The photo showed Davis conversing with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in New York on Sept. 20. It was taken at a meeting MCC was asked to organize between U.S. religious leaders and Ahmadinejad, who was in New York to address the United Nations. The encounter—amid growing U.S. tensions with Iran over its nuclear development program—was the kind of thing Davis thought MCC should be all about.

But only weeks later, on Oct. 23, Davis abruptly resigned as MCC's executive director, leaving not only an organization trying to re-envision its future but many unanswered questions about why Davis—an accomplished, charismatic man of service with the high ideals MCC traditionally has espoused—would simply quit and walk away.

"I know it felt out of the blue, and it wasn't an easy decision," Davis says. "But I was not feeling that I had the patience or the maturity to really help move MCC into its future. I think my own maturity as a leader had not evolved to that point."

> I was not feeling that I had the patience or the maturity to really help move MCC into its future. I think my own maturity as a leader had not evolved to that point.
> —Robb Davis

Before coming to MCC in 2005, Davis had worked for service agencies such as World Vision, Catholic Relief Services and the Davis, Calif.-based Freedom from Hunger. He also was a featured speaker at the Summer Peacebuilding Institute hosted by Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., and holds a master's degree in public health and a doctorate in population dynamics from Johns Hopkins University.

His training and his passion for forging grassroots responses to global problems would seem to make him a perfect fit to lead MCC. But Davis said he was not equipped to navigate MCC's interior culture or to fully understand the relationship the agency has with its constituent churches.

"I'm very high on MCC," Davis says. "I don't see another [agency] that is positioned to do what MCC does. What I said to staff when I was there was that if MCC didn't exist, we'd have to invent it … MCC should be risk-loving and risk-taking. I just wanted MCC to do more."

Central to MCC, Davis says, is its role as a prophetic voice among Anabaptist churches, which Davis believes have lost some of their theological bearings, especially when it comes to issues such as the U.S.-led war on terrorism.

"The church needs that fundamental call to return to who we are as a people," Davis says. "MCC can nurture the church [and help it] gain a bigger vision. That to me is where MCC's greatest challenge lies—speaking prophetically but nurturing the questions of How do we live at this time; how do we live as global Christians in a globalized economy?"

One of Davis' assignments at MCC was to help the agency redesign its governance and leadership model—a process that continues and was affirmed by MCC's binational board on June 9.

Davis says he found MCC's diverse—some would say fragmented—structure of regional offices and headquarters hard to work with.

"It can't just act like a family but like a large, complex organization," Davis says. "I know that leadership exists in the church, and I know MCC has within itself that kind of leadership. I hope they'll put a premium … on finding someone who will do things on the edge but who will be deeply Anabaptist and grounded in Scripture."

Davis says he hopes MCC's binational board, in choosing his successor, will signal that "this is the time for risk-taking.

"I don't think [leaders] are encouraged to take risks. There's a sense of fear to stick your neck out too far … there's a shift going on in MCC where boards are taking their roles a lot more seriously and taking more active leadership. We really have to step up and be those leaders."

Since returning to California, Davis has been doing some consulting work and curriculum development. He works 60 percent at Freedom from Hunger as a senior health adviser, working on programs that link microfinance and health education and health services. He is also doing a series of training and program evaluations with other nongovernmental organizations working in child health and water and sanitation, and working as an adjunct faculty at Eastern University, Philadelphia, teaching this summer in the Campolo School's graduate program.

He says someday he would welcome another leadership challenge, especially with a group that helps the oppressed and that "has connections to grassroots realities but speaks to the powers."

Now Davis spends a lot of time alone, thinking and taking long bike rides.

"There have been some really wonderful people who have helped me," he says.—*Robert Rhodes for Meetinghouse*

Mennonite Church USA accepts apology

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America expresses regret for persecution.

Mennonite Church USA has accepted an apology from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In late April, on behalf of the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA, executive director Jim Schrag sent a letter to Mark S. Hanson, ELCA's presiding bishop, thanking the ELCA for adopting a declaration expressing regret for persecution of Anabaptists.

Offering "deep appreciation" for the adoption of this declaration, Schrag's letter says, "We are especially moved by the expression of 'deep and abiding sorrow and regret' for past persecution of Anabaptists. We receive this apology with gratitude for its honesty, courage and humility and accept it in a spirit of forgiveness. ... We pray that God will use this gesture to release both Lutherans and Mennonites from a past that may have bound us in ways we did not even know."

Relations between the two denominational groups began moving toward this point five years ago, when the ELCA initiated interchurch conversations. From 2002 to 2004, a liaison committee, four individuals from each group, met five times—charged in part with the task of seeking ways to heal the memories of 16th-century conflict. Results of their conversations were reported in "Right Remembering in Anabaptist-Lutheran Relations."

Last fall, the ELCA Conference of Bishops and the ELCA Church Council adopted a "Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the Condemnation of Anabaptists." The declaration expresses regret for Anabaptist persecutions. It repudiates the use of governmental authorities to punish individuals or groups with whom it disagrees theologically. It also states that many of the condemnations in the Augsburg Confession did not apply to Mennonites—either the forbears of Mennonite Church USA or its members today.

"As we receive this apology and internalize it, how might it change us?" asks André Gingerich Stoner, director of Interchurch Relations for Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership. "To what extent have Mennonites been shaped by thinking of ourselves as victims of persecution? Has that contributed to our being 'the quiet in the land'? Might an apology like this invite us to rethink our identity and our posture in the world?"

Stoner sees this declaration as a significant step of reconciliation between the two groups. Parallel dialogues between Mennonites and Lutherans have also taken place in France and Germany. The Lutheran World Federation has begun conversations with Mennonite World Conference.—*June Krehbiel for Mennonite Church USA*

Might an apology like this invite us to rethink our identity and our posture in the world?
—André Gingerich Stoner

RESOURCES

Forgiveness: A Legacy of the West Nickel Mines Amish School by John L. Ruth (Herald Press, 2007, $9.99) reflects on the response of the Amish community of Nickel Mines in Lancaster County, Pa., where on Oct. 2, 2006, a gunman killed himself, five schoolchildren and wounded five others.

A Thousand and One Egyptian Nights: An American Christian's Life Among Muslims by Jennifer Drago (Herald Press, 2007, $12.99) recounts the challenges and rewards of her and her family's journey from working with refugees in the United States to living among conservative Muslims in Egypt.

A Book of Hours by Thomas Merton, edited by Kathleen Deignan, illustrated by John Giuliani (Sorin Books, 2007, $18.95), arranges writings by Merton into prayers for Dawn, Day, Dusk and Dark for each of the days of the week, creating a resource for daily prayer that imitates the ancient monastic practice of "praying the hours."

Less Than Two Dollars a Day: A Christian View of Poverty and the Free Market by Kent A. Van Til (Eerdmans, 2007, $16) takes a hard look at the realities of life in a free-market system, including examples from Van Til's experience in Latin America. He shows the inadequacies of this system and proposes an alternative system of distributive justice, equalizing the claims to both burdens and benefits.

Remembering My Pet: A Kid's Own Spiritual Workbook for When a Pet Dies by Nechama Liss-Levinson and Molly Phinney Baskette (SkyLight Paths, 2007, $16.99) provides a practical resource that will help children ages 7-13 cope with the death of a beloved animal.

The End of Days: Essential Selections from Apocalyptic Texts—Annotated and Explained by Robert G. Clouse (SkyLight Paths, 2007, $16.99) introduces readers to the beliefs and values held by those who rely on the promises found in Revelation.

Gnostic Writings on the Soul: Annotated and Explained by Andrew Phillip Smith (SkyLight Paths, 2007, $16.99) draws on ancient religions, Platonism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam and modern philosophical and psychological notions of the soul to place these Gnostic teachings in a clear historical context.

The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways that Jesus Is the Way by Eugene H. Peterson (Eerdmans, 2007, $22) continues his conversation in spiritual theology, considering the ways Jesus is the Way compared with the distorted ways the American church today has chosen to follow.

The Monastic Way: Ancient Wisdom for Contemporary Living: A Book of Daily Readings, edited by Hannah Ward and Jennifer Wild (Eerdmans, 2007, $20), organizes writings of monks and nuns from a variety of Christian spiritual traditions, Eastern and Western, one for each day of the year.

Praying at Burger King by Richard J. Mouw (Eerdmans, 2007, $10) considers how the outward life of the Christian should reflect the inner workings of the Spirit. From chicken dignity to patriotism to a weeping Savior, Mouw shows how an extraordinary God meets us in everyday life.

CALENDAR

Tears and Ashes bus tour sponsored by **CrossRoads** (the Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center, Va.), Sat., July 21. Please call 540-438-1275 by July 16 to register for the tour, which will also include stops at places of importance to Brethren and Mennonites.

Camp Moose Lake, Winnipeg, Manitoba, (Mennonite Church Manitoba) will celebrate 50 years of ministry this summer. The ***anniversary celebration*** will take place on Sun., Aug. 26 at the camp, located 35 km. northeast of Sprague. For more information, contact the Camps with Meaning office at 204-895-CAMP (2267).

Holyrood Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alberta, *50th anniversary celebration* on Sept. 15 and16. See details at http://www.holyrood.mennonitechurch.ab.ca or phone church office 780-466-3277. Please email hmcoffice@interbaun.com or phone your attendance.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Burkhalter, Braden Jettrey, May 25, to Troy and Trinda Schlabach Burkhalter, Harrisonburg, Va.

Carr, Brandon Paul, May 31, to Noah and Stephanie Holsopple Carr, Somerset, Pa.

Cordell, Makayla Lynn, June 9, to Brian and Vicki Schinski Cordell, Marion, Pa.

Dutkiewicz, Simon Jude, April 20, to Robert and Kate Willems Dutkiewicz, Atlanta, Ga.

Ellis, Kyana Joy Whitfield, May 28, to Peter and Kendra Whitfield Ellis, Waterloo, Ont.

Haines, Colby Scott, May 28, to Scott and Sarah Kennel Haines, Lancaster, Pa.

Hartzler, Elizabeth Marie, May 16, to Greg and Laura Mackey Hartzler, Bluffton, Ohio.

Isaac, Charles Mitchell, May 28, to Mitchell and Rebecca Charles Isaac, Winston-Salem, N.C.

Kauffman, Todd Michael, March 8, to Andrew and Stephanie Kauffman, Goshen, Ind.

Landes, Anna Elizabeth, June 13, to Austin and Julie Histand Landes, Harleysville, Pa.

Marks, Owen Joel, June 1, to Joel and Marlene Mohr Marks, Elkhart, Ind.

McKean, Derek Ethan, May 25, to Craig and Erin Lautzenheiser McKean, Berne, Ind.

Meyers, Julia Joy, Feb. 14, to Dale and Rachel Schmidt Meyers, Alden, N.Y.

Miller, Lilly Marie, May 24, to Clint and Nicole Slaubaugh Miller, Kalona, Iowa.

O'Connor, Jack Bradley, April 26, to Jonathan and Allison Baer O'Connor, East Aurora, N.Y.

Pannabecker, Mia Ruth, May 25, to Timothy and Joanne Dewerse Pannabecker, Bluffton, Ohio.

Ratcliffe, Samuel Robert, May 26, to Mike Ratcliffe and Meg Bauman, Waterloo, Ont.

Schlegel, Naomi Joy, June 7, to Peter and Mindy Holsopple Schlegel, Goshen, Ind.

Schrock, Liam Isaiah, March 27, Leon and Robin Schlabach Schrock, Kalona, Iowa.

Slaubaugh, Benjamin Lee, August 24, 2004, received for adoption May 5, Robert and Amanda Inch Slaubaugh, Harrisonburg, Va.

Sommers, Jackson Roman, May 31, to Michael and Valerie Wagler Sommers, Hartville, Ohio.

Valentine, Madden J., May 14, to Jason and Melissa Beck Valentine, Wauseon, Ohio.

Woelk, Kaylee Elizabeth, May 12, to Sam and Maria Gnagey Woelk, Goshen, Ind.

Zook Friesen, Michael Jasper, April 25, to Phil Friesen and Brenda Zook, Baltimore, Md.

MARRIAGES

Alderfer/Tierney: Karla Alderfer, Harleysville, Pa., and Brian Tierney, Bridgewater, Va., May 5, at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville.

Alderfer/White: Alissa Alderfer, Franconia, Pa., and Michael White, Schwenksville, Pa., April 21, at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Arsenovic/Swartzendruber: Suzi Arsenovic, Elkhart, Ind., and Jesse Swartzendruber, Elkhart, Feb. 24, at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Baker/Bauman: Gabe Baker, Goshen, Ind., and Bethany Bauman, Goshen, June 16, at Camp Mack, Milford, Ind.

Baker/Harper: Jodie Baker, Fulks Run, Va., and Erik Harper, Bowman, Ga., April 22, at Day Chapel, State Botanical Gardens, Athens, Ga.

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Bartholomew/Moyer: Michael Bartholomew, Perkiomenville, Pa., and Janet Moyer, Souderton, Pa., March 34, at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Bennett/Ware: Corinne Bennett, West Seneca, N.Y., and Jonathan Ware, Orchard Park, N.Y., May 12, at Alden Mennonite Church, Alden, N.Y.

Bergey/Dudley: Rory Bergey, Souderton, Pa., and Dana Dudley, Hatfield, Pa., June 9, at Montgomery Baptist Church, Colmar, Pa.

Blough/Simpson: Bethany Blough, Denver, Colo., and John Simpson, Denver, May 19, at Greeley Mennonite Church, Greeley, Colo.

Burkholder/Spangler: Chad Burkholder, Washington Boro, Pa., and Stacie Spangler, Millersville, Pa., May 26, at Habecker Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Butcher/Unruh: Montrell Butcher, Dallas, Texas, and Elyse Unruh, Newton, Kan., June 23, at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Dague/Williamson: Tom Dague, Uniontown, Ohio, and Crystal Williamson, Mogadore, Ohio, June 9, at Hartville Mennonite Church, Hartville, Ohio.

Davies/Doherty: Benjamin J. Davies, Barto, Pa., and Karah M. Doherty, Telford, Pa., May 17, in Ambler, Pa.

Erickson/Nafziger: Steven Erickson, Paoli, Pa., and Nicole Nafziger, Parkesburg, Pa., May 19, at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Friesen/Miller: Melanie Friesen, Plain City, Ohio, and Rod Miller, Engadine, Mich., April 21, at Shiloh Mennonite Church, Plain City.

Godshall/Showalter: Timothy Godshall, Mount Joy, Pa., and Virginia Showalter, Linville, Va., May 27, at Zion Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va.

Gors/Riegsecker: Craig Gors, Archbold, Ohio, and Kara Riegsecker, Archbold, May 12, at St. Martin's Lutheran Church, Archbold.

Heinz/Kehr: Justin Heinz, Goshen, Ind., and Hannah Kehr, Goshen, May 19, at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Haas/Reel: Jason Haas, Shirley, Ill., and Abigail Reel, Congerville, Ill., June 16, at Mennonite Church of Normal, Normal, Ill.

Histand/Schmucker: Melanie Histand, Goshen, Ind., and Jason Schmucker, Toledo, Ohio, June 2, at Toledo Mennonite Church.

Kroeker/Yoder: Karenza Kroeker, Inola, Okla., and Neil Yoder, Wellman, Iowa, May 26, at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola.

Lapp/Lichtle: Maria Lapp, West Liberty, Ohio, and Brian Lichtle, Bluffton, Ohio, at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Linscheid/Welch: Aaron Linscheid, North Newton, Kan., and Caitlin Welch, Lawrence, Kan., June 9, at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Moyer/Wireman: Gail D. Moyer, Telford, Pa., and Curtis M. Wireman IV, Mohnton, Pa., June 2, at Franconia Mennonite Church, Franconia, Pa.

Nardella/Sherman: Kyle Nardella, New Providence, Pa., and Kelly Sherman, Akron, Pa., June 16, at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Ream/Verhoff: Matthew Ream, Elida, Ohio, and Stephanie Verhoff, Columbus Grove, Ohio, June 1, at Pike Mennonite Church, Elida.

Rediger/Schroeder: Amber Rediger, Ritzville, Wash., and Aaron Schroeder, South Bend, Wash., May 19, at Intimate Gardens, Moses Lake, Wash.

Williams/Yoder: Grant Williams, Middlebury, Ind., and Lindsay Yoder, Middlebury, June 9, at the home of Al and Marie Yoder, Middlebury.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

DEATHS

Bandy, Dessie Troyer, 96, Hesston, Kan., died June 1. Spouse: Murray Bandy. Parents: Abraham and Elizabeth "Lizzie" Zimmerman Troyer. Children: Sondra Bandy Koontz. Funeral: June 6 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Burkey, Catherine "Katie" Rediger, 101, Albany, Ore., died April 3. Spouse: Harry Burkey. Parents: David and Barbara Ruby Rediger. Children: Willard, Sterling; 12 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 7 at Fairview Mennonite Church, Albany.

Burkholder, Warren Samuel, 88, Bridgewater, Va., died May 24. Spouse: Virginia Burkholder (deceased). Parents: Walter and Anna Belle Fulk Burkholder. Children: Judith A. Espinoza, Linda B. Scrogham, Donald R., Sue Burkholder, Philip W., Sheldon D. "Pete," Stephen S., Frederick M., Randall L.; 18 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 29 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Dick, Doris M. Beller, 86, Grabill, Ind., died May 30 of cancer. Spouse: Waldo Dick. Parents: William and Mattie Stalter Beller. Children: James W., Susan M., John M., Charles A.; six grandchildren; Funeral: June 3 at Maplewood Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Diller, Allen S., 89, Hesston, Kan., died May 30. Spouse: Lillian Pauline Jantz Diller (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Grace Cooprider Diller. Children: Jim, Vicki Hoffman Diller; four grandchildren; three great grandchildren. Funeral: June 4 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Dyck, Harold P., 86, Hesston, Kan., died May 29. Spouse: Elva Mae Hershberger Dyck. Parents: Jacob H. and Fannie Yost Dyck. Children: Gary, Joycelyn Dyck Cooley, Tom, Julia Dyck Roupp; 11 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 2 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Frederick, Jacob W., 83, Lititz, Pa., died May 28. Spouse: Anna Horst Frederick. Parents: N. Clayton and Martha Metz Frederick. Children: J. Ray, Jacob W., Carl T., Mariann T. Martin, Philip L., Naomi K. Frederick Ruth; 12 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 5 at Lititz Mennonite Church.

Gaskill, Verona "Skip" Jean Heisler, 74, Nappanee, Ind., died June 15 of a heart attack. Spouse: Welcome "Duke" Gaskill (deceased). Parents: Lawrence and Kathryn Heisler. Children: Cathy Mullett, Sara Hill, Clint. Eric; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 20 at North Main Street Mennonite Church, Nappanee.

Gisel, Merle D., 68, Archbold, Ohio, died May 29 of a heart attack. Spouse: Carolyn Rufenacht Gisel. Parents: Chester and Ella Short Gisel. Children: Cedric, Lincoln; two grandchildren. Funeral: June 2 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

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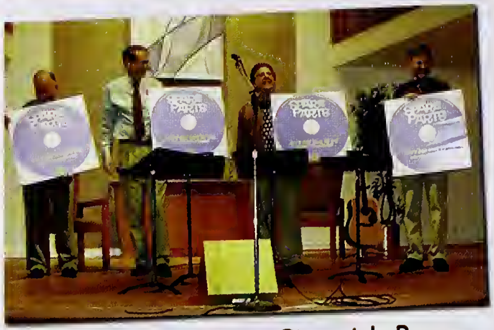

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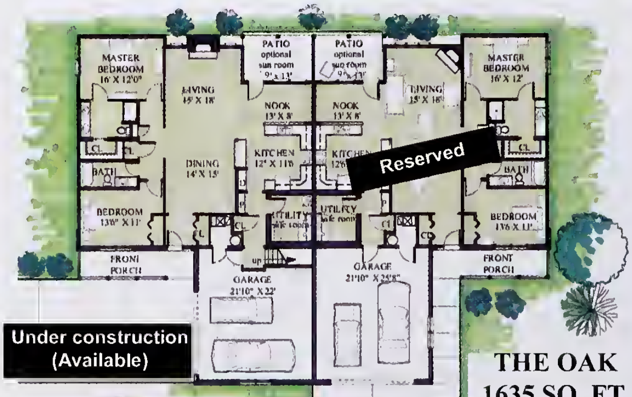
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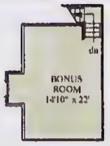
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Grieser, Nancy Porter, 72, Archbold, Ohio, died May 12 of cancer. Spouse: Orville "Hutch" Grieser. Parents: Dwight and Florence Fauver Porter. Children: David, Fredric, Sally Beck; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: May 16 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Hostetler, Florence B. Beachy, 83, Plain City, Ohio, died June 5. Spouse: Mark S. Hostetler. Parents: Eli C. and Mary Ann Kauffman Beachy. Children: George, Grace Sims, Mark Jr., Douglas; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 9 at Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City.

Kieffaber, Estella Zook, 94, Kansas City, Kan., died May 3. Spouse: Albert Kieffaber (deceased). Parents: Roy and Selina Miller Zook. Children: Lois Bare, Ruth Bitikofer, Roy, Alberta Stoltzfus, Harvey, Jim, Miriam Renfrow, Walt, Tim; 28 grandchildren; 62 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 8 at Argentine Mennonite Church, Kansas City.

Landis, Betty Jean Ziegler, 79, Franconia, Pa., died May 27. Spouse: Ralph H. Landis. Parents: Clarence and Lizzie Landis Ziegler. Children: Linda M. Landis, Betty Ann Clemmer, Laverne Z. Landis; three grandchildren. Funeral: May 31 at Franconia Mennonite Church.

Miller, Mae Schrock, 90, Archbold, Ohio, died June 2. Spouse: Eli Miller (deceased). Parents: John and Polly Hostetler Schrock. Children: Gary, Carolyn Klopfenstein, Ruth Ann Wittrig; five grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 6 at Fairlawn Chapel, Archbold.

Pletcher, Margie L., 74, Goshen, Ind., died May 29. Parents: Byron Raikes and Gordie Taliaferro Pletcher. Funeral: June 2 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Roten, Pearl Ernst, 84, Colorado Springs, Colo., died May 18 of pneumonia. Spouse: Jack Roten (deceased). Parents: Tillis and Lydia Ernst. Children: James, Daniel, John, Susan Butner, Kathleen Szymanowski; 13 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Memorial service: May 26 at First Mennonite Church, Colorado Springs.

Roth, Ruth Verelda, 82, Goshen, Ind., died May 27. Spouse: Oscar Roth. Parents: Walter and Alvina Wagner Zook. Children: Patricia Nuyken, Randall, Evan; five grandchildren. Funeral: June 1 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Scheid, Betty J. Reedy, 74, Manheim, Pa., died May 19. Spouse: Paul Scheid Sr. (deceased). Parents: Homer F. and Elsie E. Reedy. Children: Paul E., Cathy L. Scheid Fisher; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: May 23 at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Schlabach, Rachel, 20, South Wales, N.Y., died April 25 of viral pneumonia. Parents: Nathan and Mary Schlabach. Siblings: Ben, Josh, Melodie Schlabach, Hannah Schlabach, Noah. Funeral: April 28 at Alden Mennonite Church, Alden, N.Y.

Schrag, Leona Graber, 86, North Newton, Kan., died June 1. Spouse: Howard Schrag. Parents: Ed W. and Caroline Stucky Graber. Children: Howard; one grandchild; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 7 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Schrock, Richard "Dick," 58, Sarasota, Fla., died May 31 of cancer. Spouse: Sue Knepp Schrock. Children: Richard, Shawn, Jennifer VanCleet, Chrissy Gingerich; four grandchildren. Funeral: June 4 at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Stuckey, Elizabeth Anne Woelfle, 54, Somerset, Mich., died May 31 from injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Spouse: Terry Stuckey. Parents: Richard and Elizabeth Porter Woelfle. Children: Matthew, Leah Stuckey. Funeral: June 6 at Founders Hall, Sauder Village, Archbold, Ohio.

Unruh, Marjorie "Marge" Holdeman, 86, Hesston, Kan., died May 18. Spouse: Eli Unruh (deceased). Parents: Ezra and Ann Jantz Holdeman. Children: Donice Manos, Janet Stutzman, Douglas, Lowell; nine grandchildren. Funeral: May 22 at Olinger Crown Hill Chapel of Peace, Wheat Ridge, Colo.

Wampler, Naomi M. Minnich, 95, LaSalle, Colo., died April 6. Spouse: Mark W. Wampler (deceased). Parents: Jesse E. and Clara Elizabeth Blocher Minnich. Step-children: Glenn R., David, Kenneth, Virginia Crawford; 15 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren; one great-great-granddaughter. Memorial service: May 6 at Greeley Mennonite Church, Greeley, Colo.

Weaver, Harlan Lee, 56, Lancaster, Pa., died May 7. Parents: David and Katie Martin Weaver. Funeral: May 12 at Carpenter Community Church, Talmage, Pa.

Weber, Erma M. Frey, 75, Hagerstown, Md., died May 30 of cancer. Spouse: Wayne Weber. Parents: Norman and Esther Siegrist Frey. Children: Sharon Lauzus, Shirley Migliazza; five grandchildren. Funeral: June 17 at Marion Mennonite Church, Chambersburg, Md.

Wenger, Janice L. Oberholtzer, 62, Akron, Pa., died May 22. Spouse: Paul Wenger. Parents: David G. and Lydia G. Landis Oberholtzer. Children: Jodi Alderfer, Heidi Wenger, Jennifer King, Brad; eight grandchildren. Funeral: May 29 at Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland, Pa.; Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Wyse, Edith Grieser, 89, Archbold, Ohio, died May 25. Spouse: Jefferson "Junior" Wyse (deceased). Parents: Albert and Priscilla Vonier Grieser. Children: Jeffry, Karen Smith, Darlene Dechant, Faith Frey, LuAnn West; nine grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 29 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Yoder, Mary Alice Sieber, 82, Mechanicsville, Va., died June 7 of lung and brain cancer. Spouse: E. Duane Yoder. Parents: Boyd and Katie Sieber. Children: Timothy, Christopher, Jeffrey; five grandchildren. Funeral: June 10 at First Mennonite Church, Richmond, Va.

Zehr, Norine Moser, 86, Croghan, N.Y., died June 10. Spouse: Earl Zehr (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Katherine Widrick Moser. Children: Ronald, Kenneth, Myron, Howard, Elsie Zehr, Mary Lou Waugh, Velma Lacomb; 32 grandchildren; 37 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 13 at Croghan Mennonite Church.

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Bridgefolk, an annual gathering of Mennonites and Catholics, will meet at **Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.**, July 26-29. "Who do we think we are? Catholics and Mennonites growing together in Christ" will include worship, storytelling, exploring experiences of baptism and formation and service projects. Registration deadline for reduced fees is July 9. For information, see www.bridgefolk.net or send a message to bridgefolk@ambs.edu.

Youth ministry opportunity. **Salem Mennonite Church**, a rural church near Tofield, Alta., is seeking a ***youth pastor***. Qualifications: minimum of a Bible school diploma, musical capabilities an asset, have vehicle, willing to work "unusual hours." The salary will be commensurate with the successful candidate's experience. Forward resumés to Carla Fendelet, SMC, Box 56, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0; fax 780-662-0106; email cgfen@telus.net.

Bethel College invites applications for the position of ***vice president for business affairs***. This cabinet level position manages the business operations of the college, supervises operational aspects of the college, manages the budget building and evaluation process and related financial aspects of the college and provides strategic direction in collaboration with the senior management team. Experience in higher education or other complex business setting requiring creative strategic planning essential. Bethel College is a private, liberal arts, undergraduate college affiliated with Mennonite Church USA. Please submit cover letter with salary expectations, resumé and three letters of reference to Bethel College, Director of Human Resources, 300 E. 27th St., North Newton, KS 67117 or theadrick@bethelks.edu. See detailed job description at http://www.bethelks.edu/careers. Bethel College is an equal opportunity employer.

Penn View Christian School has a ***middle school teaching position*** open August 2007. The position requires that the candidate have teaching credentials in social studies. Additionally the candidate will teach some middle school computer classes. Penn View offers a Christ-centered, academically excellent education for 650 students in early childhood through eighth grade. If interested, please go to our Web site, www.pennview.org, download the application and send it to the attention of Robert Rutt, Executive Director, 420 Godshall Road, Souderton, PA 18964.

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Qualifications

- Minimum 5 years non-profit fundraising experience
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- Appreciate and support of MEDA's faith, values and goals

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Philadelphia Mennonite High School (grades 9-12) seeks applicants for the following positions for the 2007-08 school year: ***full-time science instructor*** (chemistry/physics); ***full-time social studies instructor.*** Please send the resumé to Barbara Moses, principal, Philadelphia Mennonite High School, 860 N. 24th St., Philadelphia, PA 19130; fax 215-769-4063; email mos147@comcast.net.

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Operations manager: Seeking a qualified and experienced person to serve as operations manager with oversight of financial, facility and food services areas. Responsibilities also include preparing operating budgets and financial statements.

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Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich., is seeking a ***program director*** (start date in Fall 2007): Full-time salaried position including housing, insurance and meals. This person will be responsible for developing and overseeing all camp-sponsored program events. Contact Justin Weaver (justin@friedenswald.org or 269-476-9744) if interested.

Mennonite Central Committee is seeking an ***associate director in human resources***. This person develops MCC policies and policy revisions, oversees administration of MCC compensation and benefits work, ensures HR procedures and processes are effective, efficient and timely and assists the HR director with personnel crises and other departmental tasks. Qualifications: 3-5 years experience working with compensation and benefits, demonstrated knowledge of U.S. employment law. Knowledge of MCC and MCC U.S. programs strongly preferred. This position is located in Akron, Pa. Candidates of a gender or ethnic group typically underrepresented in this type of MCC assignment are encouraged to apply. Contact, Kathy Jackson, Human Resources Director, 717- 859-1151, # 250, krj@mcc.org.

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A gift from the past

Gerald Shenk teaches at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

Strolling the Cardo near the Western Wall in Old Jerusalem again on a recent visit, I was captivated by a portrait of a father blessing his son. The scene had just been enacted before our eyes in multiple festive Bar Mitzvah family gatherings in the open square at the Wall, just below the ancient Temple Mount. The stripes of prayer shawl, the leather thongs enfolding portions of the Torah, under the shadow of huge limestone blocks fashioned for the Second Temple—the portrait captures a moment rich with reminders of a heritage of blessing passed on from parent to child, from generation to generation.

The young boy is crossing into manhood, becoming a son of the covenant ("bar mitzvah"). His father is deep in reveries, eyes closed in prayer. The father's hands rest on the boy's head, in the classic blessing. The son gazes forward with a soft smile.

Among "the gifts of the Jews" enumerated by Thomas Cahill in his book by that title (1998), many by now have become cultural patterns that we almost take for granted. Some of our basic concepts of human rights and freedoms, of education and law as a gift from God, of Sabbath rest—all may be traced back to origins in the early stages of the Semitic wanderers who came to know themselves as God's people Israel. The blessing of a father on his children is surely one of the most precious legacies. The portrait I found captures that "gift"—the gift of a fatherhood that is tender, attentive, respectful and prayerful. The hands-on blessing is also a highlight of the weekly Sabbath celebration in homes across the Jewish world (and in some Christian homes with adaptation as well).

Our extended family group touring in Israel/Palestine joined for worship in the warmly hospitable Kol HaNeshama synagogue. We then were invited into several family homes for their Sabbath meal that immediately follows. This remarkable privilege, building upon many years of relationships established by Mennonite workers in the region, brought us into close encounter and lively conversation in ways many casual visitors miss.

The family my wife and I joined had two young daughters. To watch the shiver of delight and the sparkling eyes of these two little girls as their parents placed hands of blessing on their heads was for me a keen reminder of the power of the spoken word to enact real goodness. In a world of "data smog" and flippant banter, we easily miss the tangible impact of careful words conveying true connection and blessing. I fondly remember the years when the sheer magic of this practice with our own small children was a weekly event during our family's Sabbath meal.

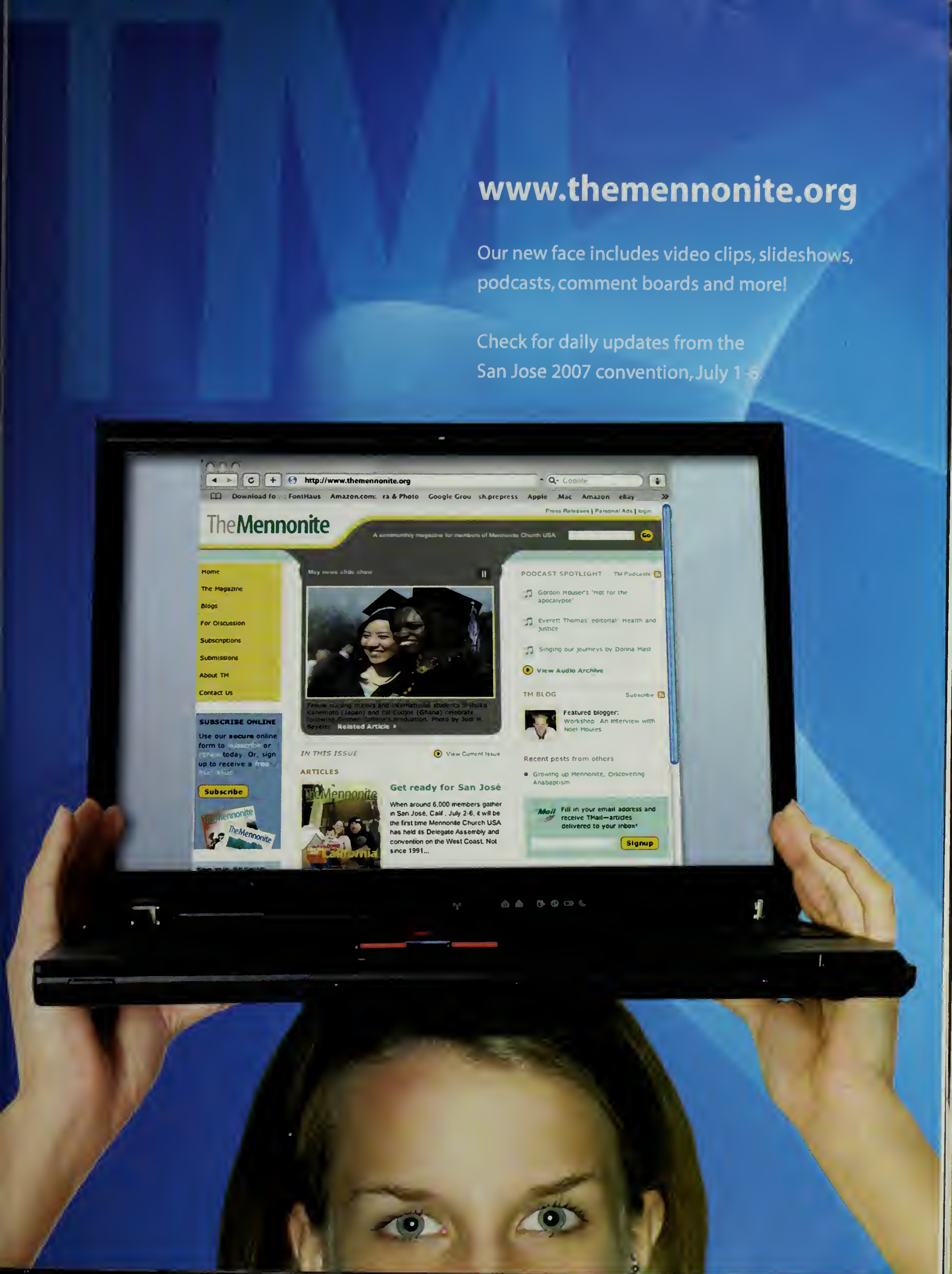
The gift of a father's blessing came alive for me also in the energetic witness of the beloved "Abuna" (Father) Elias Chacour, now archbishop of the Melkite Christian church in Jerusalem and Palestine. Anyone who has read his book, *Blood Brothers,* will recall the enduring impact of his Palestinian father's rich wisdom.

"If you become a true man of God," Michael Chacour instructed his son, "you will know how to reconcile enemies—how to turn hatred into peace. Only a true servant of God can do that." After many years of internal exile and second-class citizenship in the state of Israel, Elias Chacour has steadfastly refused to dwell in hatred. Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, his lifelong meditations on the teaching of Jesus in the Beatitudes have now taken shape in many practical ministries in Galilee. One is a remarkable church complex in Ibillin, his first parish. It is dedicated to training for peace and reconciliation. The Beatitudes are etched in numerous languages into the steps leading up to the church.

Like Jacob and Esau, whose restored relationship is depicted atop the mural, we catch a glimpse of God at work, of a shared blessing from the father to the sons.

Under a magnificent mural in the church's great hall displaying heroes of peacebuilding, Chacour told us of 10,000 graduates from the schools he established to bring together young people from Jewish, Muslim, Druze and Christian families (meei.org). Like Jacob and Esau, whose restored relationship is depicted atop the mural, we catch a glimpse of God at work, of a shared blessing from the father to the sons.

Abuna Chacour is fulfilling the blessing of his father as he gives his life to reconcile enemies. And he does so in the name of Jesus, who said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. TM



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Everett J. Thomas

Time for a sabbatical

During his adult life, Jesus often removed himself from public ministry for a while to pray and to be renewed by God's Spirit. Today, sabbaticals are the formal way the church lets leaders enter a similar cycle of action and reflection. I am grateful that Mennonite Church USA has such a sabbatical policy and that our board of directors granted me one for this fall.

After we go to press with our special issue (July 24) covering the San José 2007 convention, I will take some vacation time and then begin a three-month sabbatical—returning on Nov. 1. Here is what I will be doing during this time:

One of two smaller projects may end up in the pages of *The Mennonite* later this fall. Mennonite Disaster Service has asked me to spend some time in "Katrina-land" in September—shortly after the second anniversary of the disaster. My assignment is to interview people helped by MDS programs and provide a birds-eye view of MDS's work in the area over the past two years.

A larger project will be to pull together my records from the 1990s, then write my memoirs of the merger process for General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church. I was serving as president of the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries during that time and had a front-row seat when binational churchwide agencies and commissions worked together to create new national structures for Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

I do not intend to write a historical record of those days; rather I want to record what I experienced during a process that comes along once every generation or so. As memories of those days begin to fade, the death of Anne Stuckey (see News Digest, June 19)—a colleague at MBCM during most of my years there—lends some urgency to this task. I may need to check with MBCM colleagues as I work on these memoirs, and Anne's perspectives were always thoughtful and insightful.

Some distance from this Mennonite Church USA ministry will leave me with an even greater appreciation for the sacred task to which I have been called.

The second major task will be research for a historical novel. The subject of the novel I hope to publish eventually is Johannes Thomas—my ancestor who came to "Penn's Woods" and settled with his family near the still-standing Hans Herr house several miles south of Lancaster.

Johannes and his family arrived in Pennsylvania in the 1740s—just in time to live through the arguments about whether the colonies should become independent from England. By writing historical fiction, I hope to remember the struggle within the Mennonite community itself: Some members were loyal to the crown and eventually moved to Ontario. A fictionalized account of the debate about church and state might help us understand church-and-state issues for Anabaptists today.

Finally, I hope to get my captain's license. With more than 30 years of sailing under my belt, if I can go back through my records and verify 361 days (four hours constitutes a day) "on the water and underway," I will be able to take a 12-day U.S. Coast Guard course to earn a license. That would allow me to skipper a vessel weighing up to 100 tons and take on an occasional captain's job.

I am grateful that associate editor Gordon Houser and assistant editor Anna Groff will pick up most of my responsibilities while I am gone. Gordon will write three editorials, Anna will write two. Our board chair (Susan Sommer) and vice chair (Gerald Mast) will each write one.

When our board first discussed my request for a sabbatical, they made it clear that I was to find projects that would be personally edifying and spiritually refreshing. The projects I have planned—plus more times during each day to pray the Daily Office with the book *The Divine Hours*—will satisfy those expectations. I also know that some distance from this Mennonite Church USA ministry will leave me with an even greater appreciation for the sacred task to which I have been called. I, too, hope that God's Spirit will bring renewal and a fresh perspective.—*ejt*

TheMennonite

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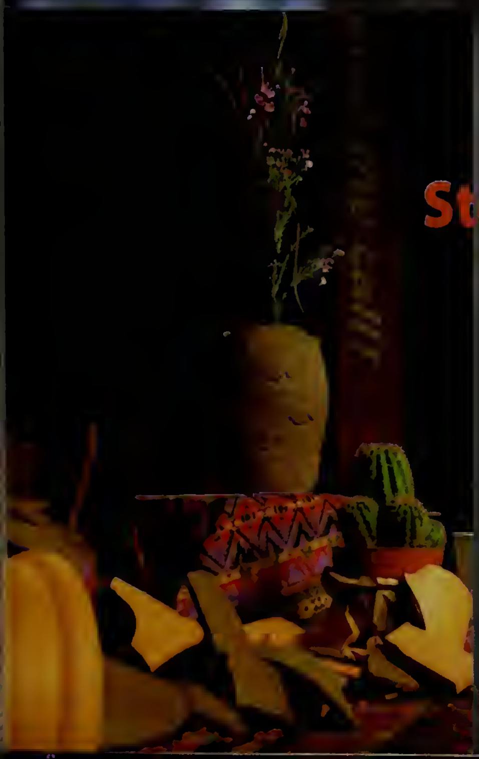
July 24, 2007

called by the Spirit as broken vessels

Stories and photos from San José 2007



San José 2007 draws nearly 6,300

Nearly 6,300 people (see box) participated in the Mennonite Church USA's biennial convention this year, held July 2-6 in San José, Calif. As usual, we dedicate this issue of *The Mennonite* to our denomination's national gathering.

Like churchwide conventions before it, San José 2007 was a complex affair. But worship was the centerpiece for both youth and adults. Meeting separately—except for one joint service on July 4—both the adult and the youth conventions were blessed with provocative preaching and stretched by new congregational songs (pages 6-12).

Mennonite Church USA members must "live the call" to participate with God's purposes in the world. If we do, we will be unified.

The secondary level of the convention experience was work. For adult delegates, that meant seven business sessions dealing with issues such as health-care access for Mennonite pastors and whether Mennonite Church USA should join a new U.S. fellowship called Christian Churches Together (page 18).

San José 2007 numbers

Adults: 1,905
Volunteers and speakers: 231
Youth and sponsors: 3,811
Junior high: 179
Children: 104
Preschool: 24
Infants: 43

TOTAL: 6,297

Work for several thousand other convention participants included building a Mennonite Disaster Service House in a parking lot (page 22) and helping some 50 local agencies through Servant Projects (see page 24).

There was also plenty of time for play, making new friends and connecting with old. But it was the times when each convention—youth and adult—gathered for worship that gave the gathering its focus. The focus was on unity in the body of Christ and within Mennonite Church USA.

To sharpen this focus, convention planners brought in articulate and winsome speakers who are not "cradle Mennonites" (the phrase used in Church Member Profile 2006 for members who grew up in General Conference Mennonite Church or Mennonite Church congregations). In fact, none of the speakers who preached at the adult worship services were cradle Mennonites.

It soon became clear that convention planners wanted to have people who have come into Mennonite Church USA from outside our circles—or who admire our church from their own tradition—to tell us how important our theology and practices are (page 7).

The lineup in the youth convention, however, was more balanced, with roughly half the speakers being cradle Mennonites.

Nevertheless, the aggregate affect of their messages was clear: Mennonite Church USA members must "live the call" to participate with God's purpose in the world, ... and if we do so we will be unified.

This was the first Mennonite Church USA convention to be held on the West Coast; it will probably be the last for several decades, as less than 7 percent of our members live west of the Rocky Mountains. Although California seemed an exotic destination, turnout was 2,380 less than for Charlotte 2005—but that convention included 802 Canadian Mennonites. The next biennial convention will be held June 29-July 4, 2009, in Columbus, Ohio. It will be called Columbus 2009.—*Everett J. Thomas*

TheMennonite

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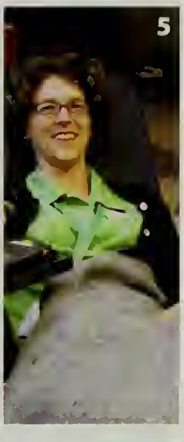
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Cover: Large photo by Silas Crews shows youth at San José 2007 holding up their lighted cell phones. Youth at concerts often hold up lights during a song. Inset photo is by Lowell Brown.

IN BRIEF

Top 10 unused youth seminar titles

10. Menno (Simon) says.
9. Dude, where's my penguin?
8. God's advice for getting some dessert at lunch.
7. OMG: missional text messaging.
6. Harmonizing for dummies.
5. Are you dating your second cousin?
4. Praise songs with shape notes.
3. How to lose friends and irritate people (just like Jesus did).
2. David knew Bathsheba: code words for "doing it" in the Bible.
1. Ecology Mennonite style: how to heat your home on college mailings.—*mPress*

What's in a name?

Among youth, the most common last name:
1. Miller—252
2. Yoder—188
3. Martin—91.

Most common girl's name:
1. Rachel/Sarah—69
2. Emily—45
3. Katie—40.

Most common boy's name:
1. David—69
2. John—55
3. Ben, Michael, Daniel, Jordon—37.

Exhibition hall giveaways:
- T-shirts—3,850
- Inflatable balls—5,250
- Pens—over 8,000
- Candy—about 250 pounds
- Clips—6,500.

—*mPress*

Pornography seminar includes men, women

SAN JOSÉ, Calif.—For the first time, Mennonite Women USA and Mennonite Men sponsored a seminar for a mixed group to discuss the increasing use of pornography within the church and to extend hope and healing to sufferers.

About 25 participants explored the topic July 3 with candor and some pain in the three-hour workshop led by Brenda Martin Hurst, who teaches at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., and J. Andrew Stoner, regional conference minister for Ohio Conference. Both have served as pastors for many years.

A breakout session for women reported that they wanted men to know the following:

- "We are devastated by our partners' use of porn and its damaging effect on our relationships."
- "Women portrayed in porn are our sisters, and we care about them. We want to be in solidarity with them. They are someone's wife, daughter, mother, sister."

A similar breakout session for men included these comments:

- "We want women to know how powerful and important sex is for us, and how strong the sex drive can be."
- "Male sexuality has become neutered in our society. Sexual energy—even the positive kind—has come to be seen as bad or wrong. We want women to know that we want to reclaim our sexuality as a gift from God."

Hurst and Stoner encouraged sufferers—both users and those related to them—to break the silence and reach out for help. Statistics show that 47 percent of Christian men regularly struggle with porn issues in their homes—i.e. online images. Increasingly women are getting pulled in though at smaller percentages.

"As Christians we need to name the problem and begin talking openly about it," Hurst said. "There are things that men won't know unless women tell them, and vice versa. We must begin listening to each other. When we do that, we can face our brokenness and reclaim God's good gift of sexuality."—*Laurie Oswald Robinson for mPress*

Lowell Brown

Quilt sells on eBay for $2,760

Quilters (from left) Rebecca Sommers, Goshen, Ind., Chris Holland, Archbold, Ohio, and Brenda Hess, Goshen, stitch a "Global Coins" quilt at San José 2007. Created from more than 30 different fabrics representing areas around the world where Mennonite service and mission agencies work and have partners, the quilt was sold on eBay July 9 for $2,760. The proceeds go to First Mennonite Church, San Francisco, which is raising funds to purchase a house for its Mennonite Voluntary Service unit. More than 70 people helped with the quilting, while others received hundreds of swatches of fabrics and made about 200 global fabric bookmarks.

Voices from the Valley learning tour

SAN JOSÉ, Calif.—On July 2, more than 20 people traveled to the Central Valley of California to hear the voices of those afraid to be heard, afraid to draw attention to their suffering.

Participants in Voices from the Valley, a learning tour on immigration sponsored by West Coast Mennonite Central Committee and Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference came to learn truths about complex immigration issues firsthand.

The group spent time with field laborers, ate a meal and listened. One laborer talked about his hope for a change in his immigration status. Another showed pride by knowing when fruit is ripe for picking.

When the workers had to return to the fields, the group went to First Mennonite Church in Reedley, where they met with local farm owners and church leaders. They said they considered their Latino laborers an integral part of the community and even their own families.

Paul Buxman, a local Mennonite farmer, said farming is about people, not just peaches. It's about getting close enough to hear and know people so that their stories intertwine with yours.
—*Jodi Read and Corinne Edington for mPress*

Colleges try 'countercultural' approach

SAN JOSÉ, Calif.—College booths at San José 2007 agreed to put an end to what has been called the "giveaway arms race."

Last August, representatives from Hesston (Kan.) College, Goshen (Ind.) College, Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., Bluffton (Ohio) University and Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., agreed to set guidelines for how much a college can spend on its booth (no more than $4,000) and prizes ($10 per youth).

Lowell Brown

e gift of life

a Dick, associate pastor of Shalom Mennonite Church in wton, Kan., gives blood at San José 2007. Participants nated 144 pints of blood during the convention.

Dave Linscheid, director of alumni relations at Bethel, said the guidelines have been a good thing for youth and colleges alike. "It's countercultural and fits with the message the youth are hearing," he said. Instead of spending the $4,000 on giveaways, Bethel invited young people to help support causes such as the Hopi Mission School Foundation by entering a ticket in a draw. Each day, Bethel donated $1 per ticket to that day's cause, up to $1,000. At the end of the week, the winning ticketholder's youth group chose an agency to receive the final donation. The youth group (51 strong) from Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church won the ticket drawing.

Limits on the money spent helped put the colleges on a level playing field while cutting down the competition.

"I like the idea," said Bluffton admissions director Chris Jebsen. "Ultimately our purpose is to promote higher education."

Kendra King, a Hesston admissions counselor, agreed. "It forces people to be more creative."

Lynn Jackson, Goshen's executive director of enrollment, said, "We want to represent the colleges as fairly as possible. This way each of the schools can really bring out their own personalities."—*Brian Schlabach for mPress*

BikeMovement documentary premieres

SAN JOSÉ, Calif.—The film "BikeMovement the Documentary—A Young Adult Perspective on Church" follows a group of young adults who rode bicycles across the United States July 10-Aug. 25, 2006, as an initiative to engage in open conversation regarding their perspectives on and visions for the church.

The documentary showed at the San José 2007 convention, with discussion following.

"I was pleasantly surprised with the boldness in which they asked questions in congregational settings," said Dan Leonard, young adult initiative coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee, after viewing the video. "The value is not so much in the questions but in the attempt at … authentic intergenerational relationship … the very fact that they are seeking conversation is valuable."

His only frustration was that the documentary included largely the perspective of ethnic Mennonites, mostly from middle-class, white homes—although the BikeMovement participants did address this in the documentary, Leonard said. "There are lots of adults I know that are more radical and ask harder questions than many of my peers," he said.

Tim Showalter, BikeMovement participant, said he felt encouraged by the enthusiasm from young and older adults who joined the conversations.

Showalter said many people asked how BikeMovement—and the questions raised—will stay alive. "I think it's 'alive' wherever people are thinking critically about what it means to follow Jesus today. And, if we're lucky, there'll be another ride next summer."

Members of BikeMovement also presented an all-ages seminar, "BikeMovement: What are young adults saying about church?"—*Anna Groff*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

Silas Crews

Letters plea for peace in Colombia

Delegates at San José 2007 sign a letter to the U.S. Senate calling for peace in Colombia and one to Mennonite leaders in Colombia expressing solidarity.

IN BRIEF

By the numbers

Offering proceeds:
- Congo (July 4): more than $26,000
- San Francisco Mennonite Voluntary Service house (July 5): about $6,000.

Host area conference (Pacific Southwest):
- Covers California, Nevada, Arizona
- Founded in 1994
- Languages spoken: 9.
- Churches: 44

In Southern California:
- First-generation Mennonites: 95 percent
- Non-European background: 91 percent
- Born outside the United States: 80 percent
- New to the Christian faith: 50 percent
- Have no personal memory of two Mennonite denominations: 50 percent.

Mennonite Disaster Service house:
- Value of materials: $45,000
- Value of house if built in San José ($800,000).

—mPress

Three win free subscriptions to *The Mennonite*

The Mennonite held a drawing from cards submitted at its booth at San José 2007 for free one-year subscriptions. The three winners are Karla C. Martin, Meridian, Idaho; Nathan Schroeder, Pocatello, Idaho; and Mark Gingerich, Goshen, Ind.—*The Mennonite*

Called

¡Vive el llamado!
Live the call!

by the Spirit

Speakers at San José 2007 laud and challenge Mennonites.

by Gordon Houser

At the adult worship times at San José 2007, July 2-6, Mennonites heard themselves lauded for their peacemaking and care for one another. They heard challenges not to hide their spiritual treasure but to share it with others.

Two of the six speakers were from Pentecostal background and brought that sensibility to their talks. Further conversation with Paul Alexander, speaker for the joint worship with youth on July 4, brought a call from other Mennonites to depend more on the Holy Spirit instead of needing to be in control (see box, page 9).

Each worship opened with spirited singing, led by musicians from Los Angeles Faith Chapel, Reba Place Church in Evanston, Ill., and Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church in Wichita, Kan., followed by calls to worship from Ephesians, which served as the basis for each talk.

Monday evening, July 2: Juan Martinez, assistant dean for the Hispanic Church Studies Department at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., presented the opening night's talk, "Called into God's Glory," in Spanish and English, moving effortlessly between the two.

"Living the call is messy," he said. While we sing beautifully, we struggle with living out God's call to live in God's kingdom. The Bible reflects this messiness, this incompleteness. While Paul worked to bring Jews and Gentiles together, they never fully did. Like the church today, "it was always a work in progress," Martinez said.

Lowell Brown

Confession: Mennonite Church USA executive director Jim Schrag (right) offers a prayer of confession for sins against Native Americans. Steve Cheramie Risingsun is at left.

In Ephesians 2:1-10, Paul writes about God's grace, which "has an impact." We all encounter walls, Martinez said, and most of these are social constructions in our minds. We need to deconstruct them.

That job is difficult in part because we live in fear—of losing power and of having power used against us. We build our own walls, he said, and like to say that "the other" is the problem. But the reality of grace invites us to forgive the other, to build community.

The heart of "living the call," Martinez said, is to demonstrate to the world that in Jesus Christ there is a chance of reconciliation. Hospitality is wonderful but not enough.

Singer-songwriter Ken Medema followed with a created-on-the-spot song based on the message. He led worshippers with the chorus: "These are the days of deconstruction. / These are the days to lift the walls. / These are the days of great disruption. / These are the days to live the call."

Tuesday morning, July 3: Following the singing, people watched a video about a resolution before the U.S. Senate to apologize to Native Americans for the atrocities done to them by the U.S. government. Then Steve Cheramie Risingsun, a Native

Continued on page 8

Living the call is messy.—Juan Martinez

Evil and suffering can only be healed if we're walking with Jesus.—Mary Thiessen Nation

Soldiering is a sacrificial vocation.—Jennifer Davis Sensenig

Continued from page 7

Mennonite pastor, spoke on behalf of Native children who were abused in many ways by whites in boarding schools, many of them run by churches. He told of the healing effect of hearing the words "I'm sorry. Will you forgive me?"

Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, then offered a prayer of confession. He mentioned that Native people continue to suffer from injustices by the U.S. government.

Speaking on "Called to Reconciliation," Mary Thiessen Nation, who teaches at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va., told of growing up in a Mennonite Brethren family in Canada, then moving to inner-city Los Angeles in the early 1970s to work for a Christian organization.

Later, when she went to Fuller Seminary and reconnected with her Mennonite roots at Pasadena Mennonite Church, she had to grieve the many "unmentionable" things she witnessed, including the murder of her friend.

She described the process of healing as three "circles": (1) our own experiences, (2) the biblical story, (3) transformation. Ephesians 2:11-22 includes phrases that reflect these circles. We are to "remember" who we once were. "Christ is our peace" names what Christ has done. We must not reduce or domesticate Christ, she said. "We [tend to] become groupies and focus on one aspect of Christ"—the Sermon on the Mount, his death, the victorious, risen Lord.

Silas Crews

Pledge: Children from the San José 2007 children's convention say the Pledge of Allegiance to Jesus Christ at an adult worship session on July 4.

We are not only to be thankful for being reconciled but to be aware of the unreconciled. "Evil and suffering can only be healed if we're walking with Jesus," she said, "if we're holding onto his nail-scarred hands." We await "the promised end to this grand story of reconciliation."

Wednesday morning, July 4: On July 4, while "others have picnics, parades and fireworks," said worship leader Rod Stafford, "here are we Mennonites having two worship services. How odd." Jesus' way is counterintuitive, he said.

Peace was the theme of the day, and a parade of children carrying flags from more than 100 nations offered an alternative focus to this Independence Day.

In her talk, "Called to Claim God's Power," Jennifer Davis Sensenig, a member of the pastoral staff at Pasadena Mennonite Church, soon dispelled the notion that peace is merely a nice thought. She focused on Ephesians 6:10-18, where Paul calls his readers to "be strong in the Lord" and "put on the whole armor of God."

While Mennonites may try to tame the language of this passage, she said, that doesn't fit the text, which uses terms for Roman combat gear to describe Christians' battle against the rulers and "cosmic powers of this present darkness."

God's battle plan in the New Testament, she said, "is nothing less than the conversion of these powers." Jesus overcame domination and violence by conversion.

Sensenig looked to the story of Joséph in Genesis for how to live in an empire. His story is "like a bell tone in Mennonite Church USA's ears," she said. Mennonites came to this land from persecution in Europe and have flourished. We have much to offer this nation, she said, just as Joséph used his gifts to aid Egypt and many other nations.

Like Joséph, we are living in a superpower nation, she said. "It is possible to live the call in Egypt." But to do so we need the armor of God.

Sensenig expressed her gratitude for the freedoms we have in the United States and called for contributing the church's wisdom to bring change. "This nation needs Mennonite Church USA to live the call," she said. "Soldiering is a sacrificial vocation. We are called to give our lives for others."

In order to follow this call, she said, we'll have to "set aside our fears and our impulses toward

Your existence helped me realize I could follow Jesus in the 21st century. —Paul Alexander

Go as geysers in the desert ready to quench a thirsty generation. —Shane Hipps

We're spending too much time fighting. —Chuwang Pam

self-preservation and take up the whole armor of God." She asked people to stand who are willing to put on the armor of truth, righteousness and faith.

Wednesday evening, July 4: The combined adult and youth worship included an offering for Mennonites in Congo and a talk by Paul Alexander, a fourth-generation Pentecostal who now teaches theology at Azuza (Calif.) Pacific University, on "Citizens of God's Kingdom."

He grew up in Kansas in a devout Assemblies of God family. His father told him, "Seek Jesus." As a teenager he loved guns, told racist jokes and listened to conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh.

At age 24, he lost his faith in God. Later he discovered that early Pentecostals were pacifists. Then he took a class from Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder. "I read Yoder and first-generation Pentecostals, and they sounded like they were saying the same thing."

By age 27 he had regained his belief in Christ and searched out resources about Anabaptism and Mennonites. "Your existence helped me realize I could follow Jesus in the 21st century," he said.

His pacifist views became unpopular among his fellow church members, especially after 9/11. "If you start questioning nationalism and war, that's going to cause trouble," he said.

Alexander described his talk as saying two things: "Thank you" to Mennonites for simply existing. And, "Please live the life you've been called to." He urged the youth to embrace their church and share their faith with others. "You walk straight, now talk about it."

Thursday morning, July 5: Shane Hipps, pastor of Trinity Mennonite Church in Glendale, Ariz., said he stumbled into the Mennonite fold. In his talk, "Called to Transformation—Living in Love," based on Ephesians 5:8-14, he told how he and Andrea, his wife, had moved to Pasadena and visited Pasadena Mennonite Church.

One day Andrea had a bad bike accident. Without being asked, church members organized meals for two months, cleaned their home and took Andrea to a job interview.

"They were the hands and feet of God," Hipps said. When he tells this story to Mennonites, they aren't surprised, he said. But when Andrea told her Christian co-workers, "their jaws dropped. … Who were these people?"

Mennonites have learned to follow Paul's advice in Ephesians to "be imitators of God," he said.

He then drew on the geology of Arizona, where, below its desert crust is porous rock that holds oceans of water out of practical reach. Mennonites' active faith is like those aquifers, Hipps said, something that went underground, preserved by protected layers above.

The things that make us unique exclude others, he said. It's hard for people to access our spiritual water. We need to "go as geysers in the desert ready to quench a thirsty generation," he said.

Friday evening, July 6: Chuwang Pam, pastor of Los Angeles Faith Chapel, was born in Nigeria and moved to Los Angeles in 1977. Later he returned to Nigeria, became a Christian and worked as a Pentecostal evangelist. In 1996, he began Faith Chapel, which works with homeless people.

In his talk, "Called to One Hope as One Body," based on Ephesians 4:1-16, Pam said he is glad the church has grown but is sad it has grown apart. "The only way to peace is through love for one another." When the church is together, there is no homelessness, no hunger or need.

He named three things that must happen before the church comes together: a rude awakening, a spiritual awakening and the crashing down of denominational walls. "We're spending too much time fighting," he said.

The closing worship culminated with Communion, using breads from around the world.

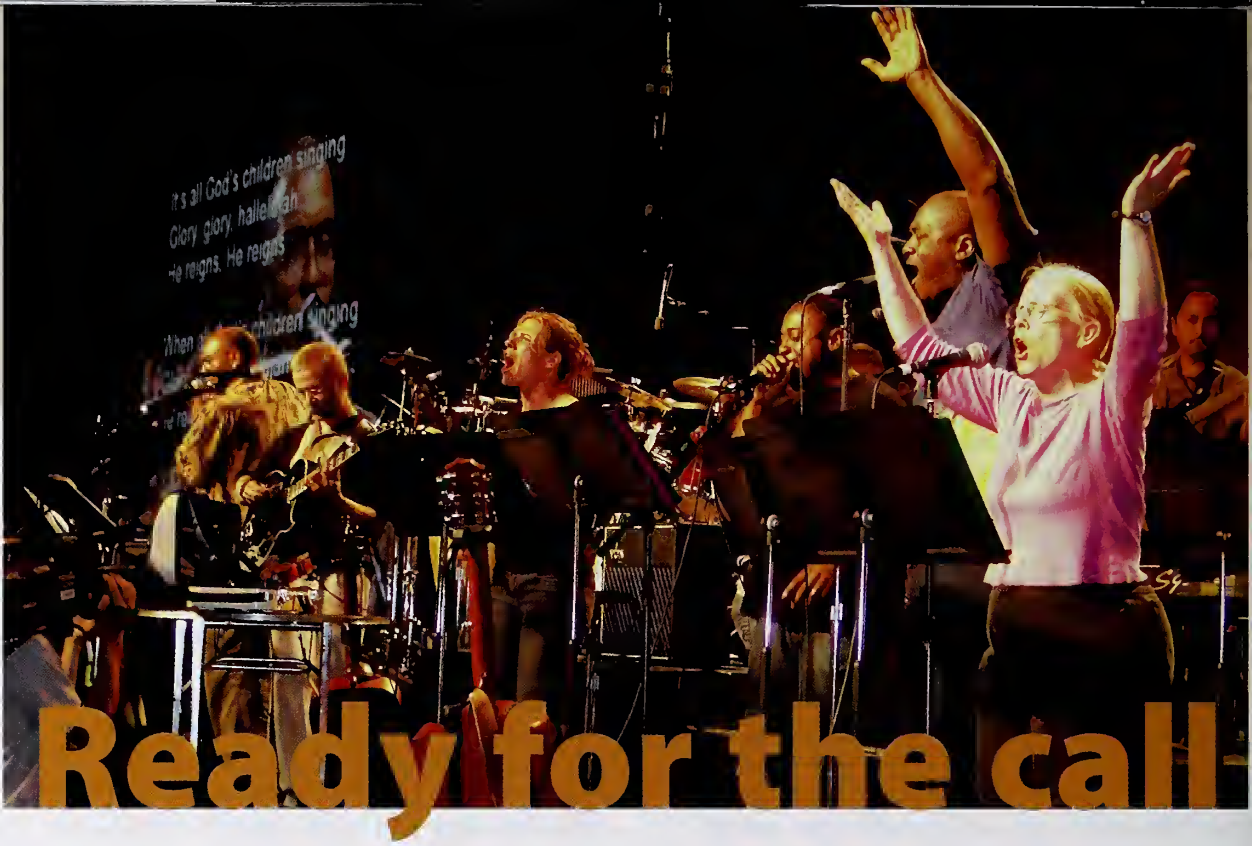
Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

'Pay attention to the Holy Spirit'

In a seminar titled "Mennonites and Pentecostals: Power and Peace," a panel of Paul Alexander, who spoke at the combined youth and adult worship (see above), Carol Rose, co-director of Christian Peacemaker Teams, and Gilberto Flores, director of missional church advancement for Mennonite Church USA, discussed what Mennonites can learn from Pentecostals. Though cautious to give any advice, Alexander said Pentecostals can offer "a theology and practice of the Holy Spirit to empower us to follow Jesus."

Rose said she became a Mennonite through the Mennonite church in Guatemala, which already practiced a combination of peacemaking and depending on the Holy Spirit. "God wants us to be in the flow of God's power," she said. Power does not equal control.

Flores asked, "How do we accept the need for the Holy Spirit [in order] to be a missional church?" Mennonite Church USA is a small denomination but a wealthy one, he said, and afraid to take risks. Its leaders—mostly German or Swiss Mennonites—hate to lose control. How can we overcome fear? "We need to pay attention to the Holy Spirit."—*Gordon Houser*


It's all God's children singing
Glory glory hallelujah
He reigns, He reigns
When all God's children singing

Anna Groff

The adult worship band leads the joint evening worship service on July 4.

Ready for the call

by Anna Groff

Messages at San José 2007 prompted youth to "live the call" in the convention facility, during worship and when they return home.

Speaker Luke Hartman reminded the youth on Friday to "pay attention to who is eating in the dining hall [at convention] and who is working in the dining hall"—and the same goes for at the airport and in the hotels.

During worship, symbolic actions like stamping one's arm with the words "broken" or dipping their hands in bowls of water to remember baptismal vows, or consider baptism, provided moments for the youth to reflect on God's spirit moving in their lives.

Speaker Jim Brenneman encouraged the youth to come "face to face" with people in need when they return to their communities—to see the image of Christ in them.

The youth cheered loudly when Paul Alexander reminded them during the joint worship how "cool" it is that Mennonite Church USA prioritizes antiracism as a church goal—another way to live the call.

During the worship sessions, the worship band led the youth in hymns (sung both a cappella and with the band) and worship songs in Spanish and English. During the theme song "Live the Call (Vive el Llamado)" on Friday night youth gathered in the front and in the aisles to jump up and down during the chorus and to sway side-to-side during the slower number that followed.

In addition to seminars and Servant Projects, about 120 youth participated in Speak Up! (a format similar to the adult delegate sessions with a moderator and round-table discussions). They also sat in the delegate assembly at tables during discussions on the antiracism church goal and the presentation from the Mennonite Church USA delegation to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Some youth even shared during the delegate assembly open mike time.

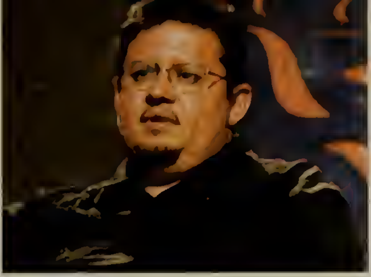
During the last Speak Up! session on Friday, youth had time to come forward to share final thoughts from their table. Hilary Short of Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio, said her table has the goal of not being afraid to voice their opinions at church and to "be aware of Mennonite Church USA decisions."

Hannah Nye from West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, IA, said her table wants to be "an example of open-mindedness for change."

Youth at Speak Up! reach for tattoos of the Mennonite Church USA symbol.

re a small ordinary people] denomination, but God will et us fail.—Michele Hershberger

Each of us at one time will have to face the brokenness of the world. —John D. Roth



Are you in pain and brokenness? God has never left your side.—Rudy Carrasco

If you feel isolated, allow Jesus to bring you peace. The world is all about drawing lines. —Jason Evans

How to 'live the call'

Monday evening, July 2: "Chosen"

Michele Hershberger, chair of the Bible and ministry department at Hesston (Kan.) College, firmly told the youth that they are chosen by God even if they don't live in a "Mennonite ghetto," don't have the "right" last name or are a "new Mennonite."

Hershberger's Scripture, Ephesians 1:1-19, tells of God choosing his people. "Ephesians 1 is true whether you and I feel it or not," she said. "We are a small ordinary people [and] denomination, but God will not let us fail ... 'I know you make mistakes,' says the Lord, 'but I am God and we will win.'"

Tuesday morning, July 3: "Broken"

John D. Roth, history professor at Goshen College, shared his personal story of brokenness after telling the youth "each of us at one time will have to face the brokenness of the world."

Roth traveled in Europe at age 18 to get away from his Mennonite community. "Mennonites were good people," he said. "I was just sick of them."

While in Greece, a man tricked Roth out of all his money. Roth described himself as "penniless and humiliated ... my anger turned to self-loathing."

He got on a train with no plans, but spontaneously decided to get off at Zurich and wandered to a church. Behind him he heard a tourist group who spotted him by his Goshen College sweatshirt. The tourists were a group of Mennonites who heard his story, prayed for him, took a collection and sent him on his way. Roth said he left a "changed person."

After Roth's message, the youth went to tables where they placed stamps of the word "broken" on their arms to consider where they need healing and wholeness.

Tuesday evening, July 3: "Giving new life"

From his opening words—"I want to tell you how my mother died"—to his closing altar call, **Rudy Carrasco** urged the youth to allow God to turn their brokenness into new life. "Reach for God," Carrasco said as he invited the youth to pray with deacons at the front of the auditorium. "Come, have a moment of peace and rest."

Dozens came forward, responding to his call to "look at yourself honestly and listen for God's voice."

Carrasco, executive director of the Harambee Christian Family Center in Pasadena, told his own story of brokenness and redemption. Carrasco's mother died when he was 7. His older sister, who raised him, told him years later that before their mother died, she had cried, "What's going to happen to my children?"

Overwhelmed by trying to raise three siblings, his sister called a Christian suicide hotline. A counselor encouraged her to start attending church, where she accepted Christ as her Savior. "That little church adopted us," Carrasco said. But the pain of his childhood never completely went away.

"Are you in pain and brokenness?" he asked. "God has never left your side."—*From Paul Schrag, Mennonite Weekly Review in mPress*

Wednesday morning, July 4: "Joined in Christ's Peace"

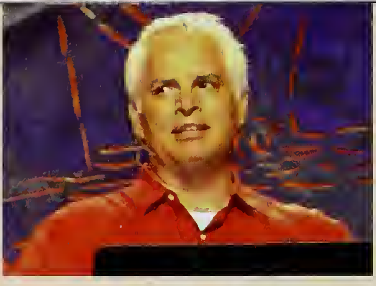
Jason Evans, co-founder of the Ecclesia Collective, said he learned to "hate people that weren't like me" after some young men who were Latino beat up Evans' best friend in school. Later, when Evans had an after-school job with one of the young men and saw his family, he learned that his father was stuck working for people like Evans' father, partially because of an "unbalanced trade agreement" between U.S. and Mexican governments.

In this moment, Evans realized the isolation and alienation all around him.

Now, Evans works in San Diego where people are "not very interested in Jesus," but Jesus stood up and validated isolated individuals and systems, he said. Evans challenged youth to do that in their communities. "Or, if you feel isolated ... allow Jesus to bring you peace," Evans said. "The world is all about drawing lines."

Wednesday evening, July 4: "Citizens of God's Kingdom" from Paul Alexander *(Joint worship. See article on page 9.)*

Continued on page 12



By loving the oppressed we ourselves are introduced to Christ in new ways.—Jim Brenneman

God wants you to put on the whole armor of God.—Brenda Matthews

God doesn't want your warm feelings. God wants radical disciples.—Luke Hartman

Continued from page 11

Thursday morning, July 5: "Faces of the Kingdom"

Jim Brenneman began with a list: Macs and Microsoft, preppies and punkers, skinny and fat, Yoders and Mendezes, and Jews and Gentiles to illustrate the "us against them" we see everywhere today and in history.

He said the Gentiles of today are anyone who we imagine to be a "them" and not an "us," however, Christ identifies with outsiders. Brenneman encouraged the youth to see the oppressed "face to face."

"By loving the oppressed … we ourselves are introduced to Christ in new and fresh ways," he said.

Anna Groff

Stacy Griffin leads the worship band for the youth convention.

Friday morning, July 6: "Empowered to Live"

Brenda Matthews, actress, poet, playwright and activist, firmly instructed the youth to "suit up and boot up and go forward" with the armor of God.

"Today God wants you to put on the whole armor of God," she said. "Age has nothing to do with God's plan for your life."

She told of her younger years when she knew how to "play church" and put on her "church face"—even though her father left her and she was sexually abused. But through God's power she moved beyond her "spirit of rejection."

She gave examples of God's work through Joseph and Queen Esther and said, "God has always used people who have been through stuff."

Matthews said each person in the hall has a particular calling and it's important to work with people outside the Mennonite church. "Jesus spent time in the 'hood because they kept kicking him out of church," she said.

Friday evening, July 6: "Live the Call"

Luke Hartman told two stories of near-death experiences in his life: a close call with another car in the backhills of Virginia and the day of the Virginia Tech shooting when he was supposed to be on that campus, but had a conference call at home instead. "It hit me and the world around me shook and trembled," he said.

Hartman said when we feel the world shaking, we need Christ and his people. In our individualistic culture we need to "give ourselves to something bigger than we are"—both to Christ and the church, he said.

Hartman also reminded the youth of the "mountain-top" experience of convention. "We need to be very careful when we return to the valley," he said. "Don't forget we're talking about one God."

He also spoke of the temptation to return home to mundane life with a "few more warm feelings."

"God doesn't want your warm feelings," he said. "God wants radical disciples. … The only voice he has is your voice."

Anna Groff is assistant editor of The Mennonite.

Anna Groff

Youth worship leaders Ben Bolanos, San Francisco, and Rachel Gerber, Denver, lead in prayer while holding babies.

Anna Groff

The drama team for the youth presents a skit on Monday night about being the "chosen" vegetable.

Confidence to 'live the call'

by Jake Yordy

It was the first day of the youth convention, with energy and excitement in the air. As Michele Hershberger, professor at Hesston (Kan.) College, proclaimed, "We are chosen," the praise songs began and we knew God was there.

We jumped into the Epistle to the Ephesians, a letter lovingly written from Paul expressing his love for the church and the Christian doctrine. The speakers made the Scripture so applicable and so approachable, it seemed as though it was written for each and every one of us personally, addressing the issues we face today.

That night I felt alive and ecstatic and I saw many friends. On Tuesday my youth group went swimming and played volleyball and table tennis in the recreation room, enjoying the simplicity of a game with nobody trying to compete or vanquish.

Anna Groff

On July 5, the youth, junior high and young adult conventions socialized at the Santa Cruz boardwalk.

We went to a seminar on sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, only to be shocked when the first thing Lynn Miller said was, "I am Lynn Miller, and I love sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll!" He went on to explain that drugs were created by God (everything God makes is good), and were only wrong because humans used them incorrectly. He also explained that sex in a relationship is like the frosting on a cake—the flashy and tasty part, but only enjoyable after you've baked the cake. "After all," he said, "who eats a cake with just frosting in it?" As for rock 'n' roll, he has always enjoyed it.

The messages on Tuesday prepared us for our service project: First, with the message of John D. Roth, professor at Goshen (Ind.) College, we realized that we were broken people, imperfect and often striving to hide our true selves. That night, Rudy Carrasco, executive director of the Harambee Christian Family Center in Pasadena, Calif., taught us how often we alienate others.

During the service project on Wednesday, we cleaned up public parks, gaining humility and an appreciation for our planet. During our project, some of my close friends and I encountered young children who lived right on a park. They picked us some small but very ripe peaches from their own tree. These children had only a few fruit trees, and they picked out the most delicious and ripest peaches for us to eat. We gave them a toy car that we had found, still amazed by their generosity. Those were the people we were helping.

That night we went to the boardwalk at Santa Cruz, relishing the welcome salty chill and the beautiful misty ocean. The cable ride provided a scenic and very high view of Santa Cruz with the natural and urban areas surrounding it.

Friday morning began with a bang. Sleepy teens, by now being forced to walk into the worship room (having ran in, bodysurfed and made human pyramids while waiting to enter) were surprised by Brenda Matthews, poet, playwright, activist and more, yelling, "I love young people!" She read moving and powerful pieces, advocating not only God's love for us but our love for God, and how almost every wrong in the world can be fixed by God. Matthews reminded us to love and defend God and to arm ourselves with his love.

And it was during lunch that we realized—San José 2007 is over. There goes that great feeling. Now, we are going to go back to these boring churches where energy is zapped from us. We can no longer feel God as we did that week.

But that night, the speaker Luke Hartman, education consultant for Harrisonburg (Va.) City Public Schools, felt our pain and knew what we were thinking. It isn't over, he said, but just beginning. We can change so much. If we do actually live the call, then we will be poised to aid others and worship him. If we live the call, he said, then this feeling—this power, love, collective energy and excitement—will not leave us.

There it was: the dreaded end of a great week. Sure, the opportunity to catch up on sleep, but the end of thousands of kids, just like me, giving themselves to God with me. I felt a certain element of sadness: There go all my new friends, all my relatives in Christ. I also felt a strange emotion: confidence. I decided then that I would do all in my power to live the call.

I decided then that I would do all in my power to live the call.
—Jake Yordy

Jake Yordy is a member of North Suburban Mennonite Church, Libertyville, Ill.

Young adults comprise 10 percent of assembly

by Anna Groff

Kristin Yoder (center), a YODA (YOung adult Delegate to Assembly), meets with her YODA small group for orientation before the delegate assembly opened.

Anna Groff

YODAs (YOung adult Delegate to Assembly) and other young adult delegates came out in strong numbers at San José 2007.

Amy Nissley, associate pastor at Bethel Mennonite Church in Mountain Lake, Minn., and a YODA planner, told the YODAs that the age makeup of delegates has changed over the years, and the number of young adults has dramatically increased.

Nissley said she remembers when she was a delegate in 1999 and it felt to her there were only three other young adult delegates. She said this convention had about 45 YODAs. Including YODAS, there were approximately 75 delegates under the age of 30.

This year YODAs used a "small group system" for orientation. Six to eight YODAs were paired with a mentor and the groups met once or twice during the convention week.

Kristin Yoder, a YODA from Phoenix, Ariz., said it was "comforting to know that there was an adult with previous delegate experience who was excited about young adults participating in the sessions and open to all of our questions and comments."

It was comforting to know that there was an adult who was excited about young adults participating in the sessions and open to all of our questions and comments.
—Kristin Yoder

Yoder said her small group leader, Beryl Jantzi, helped her group understand the health care resolution by giving them an idea of the current status of health care in the Mennonite Church and how it would change if the motion passed.

On Wednesday afternoon the YODAs met with six Executive Board members to ask questions about their decision-making and their power.

Janeen Bertsche Johnson, board member from Goshen, Ind., addressed a question about the amount of power the Executive Board has. She said she now realizes the power she has is part of the "establishment." She said she works to "give a voice to people without power" and speak back to the margins to remind them of the larger body.

Merrill Moyer, board member from Souderton, Pa., reminded the YODAs of the power they have as delegates. The board moves forward from the direction taken by delegates, he said.

Bertsche Johnson spoke to an issue one YODA raised concerning homosexuality and church membership. She told the YODAs there is no official policy that homosexual people cannot be members, but some conferences have said that congregations should not admit practicing homosexuals.

Bertsche Johnson said Constituency Leaders Council offers a critical place to discuss congregational discernment. She believes it is important to have a similar conversation around delegate tables, but at this point, she said, making a decision on this subject would be divisive.

One evening, more than 80 young adults discussed questions in small groups like, "How do we balance the tension between our investment in this goal of being involved/connected with the church and our personal yearnings for freedom and growth away from our home congregations?"

Laura Leischner, of Harrisonburg, Va., wondered how young adults should balance "waiting to be asked and wanting to be tapped" with "taking initiative." Leischner, a Ministry Inquiry Program participant in Denver, Colo., said that through the program she was "tapped" to preach, and since then she has realized that she's worthy to answer those calls.

Krista Ehst, of Bally, Pa., said when she shares at her table at the delegate assembly, all feedback she receives is positive and that feels patronizing. She desires an "equal exchange."

To Keith Wilson, of Dyer, Ind., voice equals action. For young adults to have a say in the church, they need to be involved, he said.

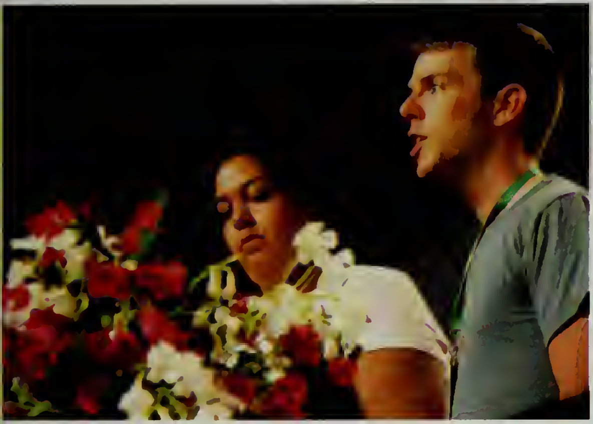
Felicia Moore, of Bristol, Pa., said the church should work to connect people's gifts to one another. Moore, an alternate delegate, feels that responsibility, as well as a "peace" because she knows her home congregation trusts her with decision-making.

Jason Shenk, of Goshen, Ind., summarized his table's thoughts by mentioning that youth want to see people in their 20s and 30s at church—people to look up to.

He also brought up the tension between college and noncollege-educated young people in the church, and the lack of noncollege-young people present at convention.

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

Young adults bring statement to assembly


Lowell Brown

Roxy Allen, San Francisco, Calif., and Jeremy Yoder, Moscow, Idaho, present a report regarding young adult visions for the Mennonite Church.

Anna Groff

Young adults discuss their vision for the church—conversations that contributed to the statement brought to the delegate assembly.

A group of young adults developed a statement as a response to formal and informal conversations that took place through BikeMovement, Young Adult Fellowship Retreat, Church of Our Dreams conference at Hesston (Kan.) College, at Mennonite colleges and churches, and at events at both Charlotte 2005 and San José 2007. The statement was drafted and presented in response to an invitation from Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership for feedback from BikeMovement and other conversations about young adults' visions for the Mennonite church.

Young adult statement presented to the delegate assembly on July 6

Young adults have been called the future of the church. We come before you today to say that the future has already begun.

We come from varied walks of life. Some of us went to Mennonite colleges, some of us did not. Some of us are connected to our home congregations, and others are finding it hard to connect to any congregation. We have built relationships that transcend geography. We are using the new medium of the Internet—including sites like the Young Anabaptist Radicals blog and the Anabaptist Network on Facebook—as forums for conversation, debate and community. We are seekers in our faith and full of complex questions.

We have experienced a shift in the way the church listens for our voices. We have been offered space to converse with the church community. A clear example of this is the number of Young Adult delegates sitting on the floor today. As one young delegate said, "As soon as I open my mouth, the attention of the table is on what I have to say." Space has been given here at San José for conversations with Executive Leadership. BikeMovement created opportunity for conversations with congregations and with conference leadership. Our request for space for our voices has been heard, and we thank you for hearing us.

Many of you have been participants in these conversations and have heard for yourself our questions and comments. The nature of our diversity does not lend itself to a unified voice. Many of the young adults participating in these conversations come from the context of a middle class, white and Mennonite college-educated perspective. We lament the fact that it has been difficult to represent the true diversity of young people within the Mennonite Church. In light of this acknowledgment, these are some of the themes we have heard:

- We are thankful for the leadership we have been given and want more ways to get involved in the church, both in local congregations and at broader organizational levels.
- We are grateful for the opportunities we have had to learn from the global Anabaptist movement and desire to share these experiences and relationships with those who have not had this privilege.
- Social justice and a visible, active witness for peace are integral to our faith.
- We desire the church community to be a place where we can grapple with complex questions, realities and issues without preconceived outcomes.
- We desire an attitude of openness and hospitality across age, race, gender, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status.
- We struggle with the tension between opportunities that take us outside our local congregations and our desire for continued connection and relationship with the church.
- We seek community that deliberately includes those on the margins of the traditional Mennonite culture.
- We want a church that practices its beliefs with consistency and integrity.

In response to our conversations, we challenge you, our delegates and your representative congregations, to:

Continue to walk with us and mentor us as we work through questions that may be uncomfortable for you. They are often uncomfortable for us. Let's learn together.

Continue to encourage us to take leadership roles; many of us yearn to be involved, but lack the courage to call ourselves forward. Help us recognize and utilize our God-given gifts and talents.

Let us use our skills and perspectives to help the church call our peers into fellowship. In the listening that we have done, we acknowledge that young adults do not have a unified vision for the future of the church; this is a testament to the current state of the church. We sense that the Mennonite Church currently does not have a shared theological vision as many individuals, congregations, conferences and organizations have varied definitions of our shared Mennonite identity.

So we leave with you these questions: How do we live, worship and continue to cultivate this community of believers in the midst of, or even in spite of, these differences? What shared practices will keep us in relationship with each other as we walk forward as a complex and ever-changing church community?

Lowell Brown

Silas Crews

Scenes from San José 2007

A. Youth and adults come together for a joint worship on Wednesday evening, July 4.

B. Jeff Raught and Kristina Fenninger present a skit at the youth convention about brokenness.

C. Conventioneers wait in the hallway for the doors to open for the joint worship on July 4.

D. Between sessions, youth enjoy games.

E. Adult worship leader Rod Stafford of Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church reads a passage from Ephesians.

F. Adults and youth sing at the Hymn Sing July 4.

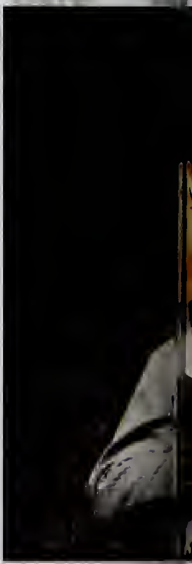
G. Children cool off in the fountain outside the San José Convention Center.

H. Youth hold candles during a worship service on July 3.

J. Hundreds took part in a Communion service at the closing adult worship on July 6.

K. More than a few conventioneers took naps when the occasion arose.

L. People of all ages came to San José 2007.



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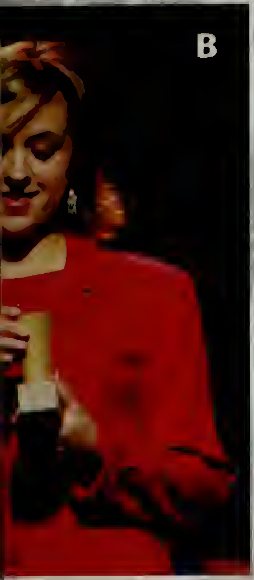
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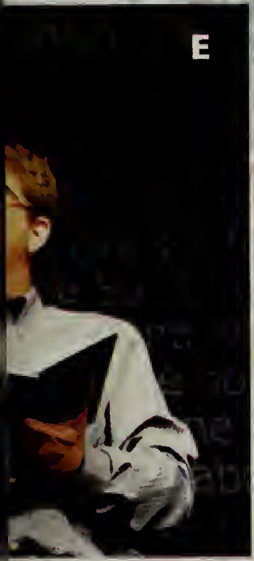
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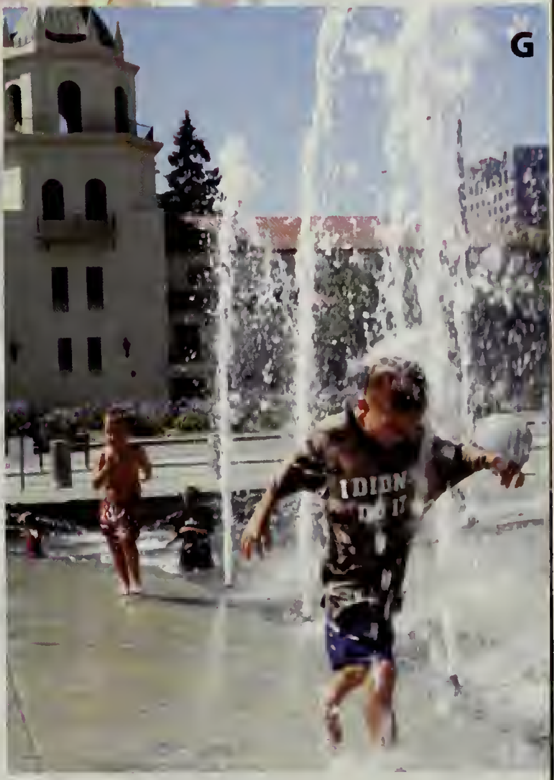
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Silas Crews

Moderator-elect designate Ed Diller addressed the San José 2007 delegate assembly shortly before the vote that affirmed his nomination.

Delegates approve plan for pastors

Also vote to join Christian Churches Together and elect new leaders

Delegates to the San José 2007 assembly voted overwhelmingly in their final session on July 6 to continue working at a plan that could provide health insurance for all pastors and church workers in Mennonite Church USA congregations (see box). Of the 752 delegates who voted, 700 voted in favor, for a 93.4 percent tally.

"This is a four-lap race," Mennonite Church USA's executive director Jim Schrag told the delegates before they voted. He explained that the first lap was their vote. The second lap is working with denominational agencies and schools to enlist their participation. The third lap will be working with area conferences.

The fourth and final lap will be the most important: inviting congregations to participate.

"Enough congregations have to opt in," Schrag said, "for the plan to be feasible. If critical mass is not achieved, it's not worth trying to implement it."

Schrag said he hopes to know within two years whether such a plan will work.

According to the proposal, congregations would be charged rates "recognizing the characteristics of each pastor."

Congregations would also be asked to make "mission" contributions "to subsidize the purchase of health insurance for pastors serving in lower-income congregations."

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

Health insurance for pastors

Mennonite Church USA delegates first began working on the issue of health-care access at the Atlanta 2003 assembly, where it authorized the Healthcare Access Initiative. Delegates at Charlotte 2005 identified priorities for Executive Leadership staff to work on in the two years between Charlotte 2005 and San José 2007. One of those priorities was improved access to health care for pastors and church workers. The other two priorities entailed promoting health and wellness and advocating to government.—*Marathana Prothro for mPress*

Apology to Native Americans

The delegate assembly was scheduled to consider a resolution on July 3 that called for Mennonite Church USA to support a bill before the U.S. Congress apologizing to Native Americans for their treatment throughout U.S. history. But during the adult worship service earlier in the day, Steve Cheramie Risingsun, a Mennonite Native American leader, told several stories about how his people were massacred and described the history of Native American suffering.

Risingsun's speech evoked a long and emotional standing ovation. Several hours later in a delegate session, Mennonite Church USA moderator-elect Sharon Waltner declared that the church had shown its support for the resolution.

"We … support the joint U.S. Senate and House bills," says the resolution, "that acknowledge a long history of official depredations and ill-conceived policies by the United States government regarding Indian tribes and offer an apology to all Native Peoples on behalf of the United States."

Christian Churches Together

Delegates also supported a proposal to join Christian Churches Together (CCT), a fellowship of Christian churches in the United States. All but six of the 752 delegates voted for the action.

"CCT is unprecedented in including significant participation from Pentecostal, Evangelical, Roman Catholic, [underrepresented] Racial/Ethnic, Orthodox and mainline Protestant churches," said Andre Gingerich Stoner, director of interchurch relations in his report to the delegates. "The vision for CCT began in 2001, when a diverse group of Christian leaders met and lamented the divisions within the body of Christ."

Mennonite Church USA participation in CCT will mean a $1,000 contribution and that Stoner and two other members of Executive Leadership will attend CCT meetings twice each year.

Focus on national identity new initiative

Delegates also hear point-counterpoint about conference discipline of churches.

National identity

One resolution emerged from the delegate body and required action by the delegate assembly.

Doug Kauffman, from Benton (Ind.) Mennonite Church, sponsored a resolution that calls the Executive Board to "formulate a process that helps us explore our identity as Mennonites living in what many consider the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth."

The resolution called for conversations with Mennonites in Canada and Mexico in the process. Delegates suggested that any task force created to work at this issue also have conversations with Mennonites in Colombia and Northern Ireland.

"This is an opportunity for us to stop making assumptions about what it means to be Mennonite in the world," said Dawn Landis, Lancaster, Pa.

The resolution passed with 564 voting yes and 95 voting no, for an 85 percent tally.

Agreeing to disagree

In table groups, delegates were asked to respond to a point-counterpoint presentation about conference discipline of congregations when there are differing interpretations of the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.

Lloyd Miller, conference minister for Central District Conference, represented a group of 21 delegates who signed a statement proposing that Mennonite Church USA limit the actions an area conference can take when it decides to discipline a congregation.

"What is the purpose of congregational discipline?" Miller asked. "Often the discipline is to relieve the fear of the majority."

Kurt Horst, conference minister for Allegheny Conference, responded to the statement.

"This proposal is at variance with the bylaws [of Mennonite Church USA]," Horst said. "It treats sin as if it were only an individual problem and not at work in churches or conferences."

Most delegates who responded during the open-mike time said the church needs to have discipline and accountability but also expressed concerns about expelling a congregation. Others said the action being requested would change Mennonite Church USA polity.

"We come as a federation of area conferences with traditions of [discipline and accountability]," said John Rohrer, Plain City, Ohio. "If we would change the polity now it would [be disruptive]."

Delegates were not asked to take an action on the proposal because "voting would create deep divisions within the delegate body and in the church," said Jim Schrag.

he call!
llam

Everett J. Thomas

Mennonite Church USA leaders huddled during the delegate assembly to decide the next item. From left: 2005-2007 moderator Roy Williams, executive director Jim Schrag, 2007-2009 moderator Sharon Waltner, and moderator-elect Ed Diller.

Other reports included a joint presentation from Mennonite Church USA agencies, a statement from young adult members (see page 14), introduction of a six-year review of Mennonite Church USA structures (see page 23), additional information from Church Member Profile 2006, a lifestyle and sustainability report from Mennonite Creation Care Network, a report from the Mennonite Church USA delegation that visited Congolese Mennonites in February, a report from the Executive Board's antiracism team and a combined financial report for Mennonite Church USA agency budgets that ended Jan. 31.

Delegate sessions concluded with outgoing moderator Roy Williams giving a framed picture of a John Deere tractor to new moderator Sharon Waltner. Waltner and her husband are farmers in Parker, S.D.—*Everett J. Thomas*

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- Amazing Southwest
- Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta
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- Grand Canyon (south)
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- Santa Fe - oldest capital
- "Sky City" - Acoma Pueblo
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Children connect to church in Congo

Hearing stories, raising funds and making scrapbooks build relationships.

Anna Groff

Fourth and fifth grade children pose arm-in-arm with "enemy animals" while acting out the "Peaceable Kingdom."

Anna Groff

Allaire Little Coyote creates a scrapbook page to send to children in the Congo.

Anna Groff

Stanley Green, executive director of Mennonite Mission Network, tells the story of Eldad from Congo.

The children's convention, decorated with flags from Congo, Haiti, China, Lithuania, Dominican Republic and more, created a space for more than 100 elementary-age children to consider others around the world.

One morning they processed to the adult worship with their flags and offered the adults a peace prayer. Other mornings they carried metal buckets to the exits of the adult worships asking for loose change to raise money for medicine in hospitals in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The children helped count the change after each day's collection.

Other efforts to be a part of the Congo-Mennonite Church USA relationship include making scrapbook pages to send to Congo and hearing a story from Stanley Green, executive director of Mennonite Mission Network, who traveled to Congo as part of the Mennonite Church USA delegation in January.

Green visited the children's convention on Tuesday morning and told the story of 11-year-old Eldad, a boy in the Congo who offered Green's delegation a 500 Congolose Franc note for the visitors to buy a cake—an extremely humbling act of generosity, Green said.

Rosemary Widmer, a children's convention leader, said the children could relate to Eldad—a child their age—and they appreciated the idea of a child offering to help an older person.—*Anna Groff*

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Junior highers 'grow' money for Congo

With $5 each, junior highers raise $5,000 before and during convention.

Junior highers laugh with the improv comedy group, Panic Squad, on the final night of convention.

Anna Groff

Erin Martin

The junior high youth succeeded in making $5 "grow" to raise money for the Democratic Republic of Congo as part of the church-to-church relationship.

Nearly 200 junior highers, who stayed at a hotel near the convention center, raised almost $5,000 before and during San José 2007.

Before the convention, each junior high student received $5 in the mail to put toward raising funds.

Erin Martin of Cary, N.C., said she planned to make jewelry but in the end decided simply to ask for donations.

She tripled her starting funds—providing $15 for the Congo fund.

Three girls from Pennsylvania raised $158 by selling cookies in their neighborhoods. Another group of students raised $250 from a garage sale.

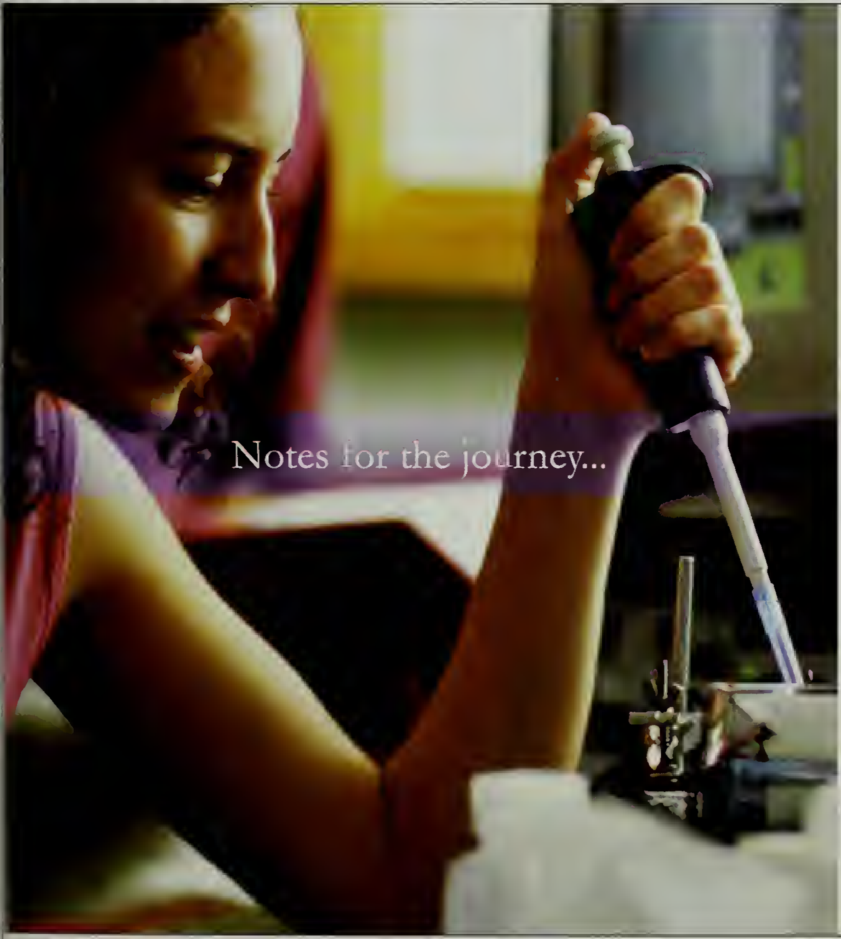
Martin said the highlight from the week was the worship band, One Way Up, made up of Hesston (Kan.) College graduates.

Her home church worships mostly through hymns. "I am more happy with stuff I can get up and dance to," she said. She also said she made new friends at the convention.

On Friday evening The Panic Squad, an improve comedy group, performed for the junior higher convention. The Panic Squad consists of Andrew Bright, Cliff Prang and Scott Campbell. *—Anna Groff*

How the junior highers made their $5 grow:

- **mowing lawns,**
- **cooking full dinners,**
- **selling snow cones, cookies and lemonade,**
- **making greeting cards,**
- **garage sales.**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Volunteers build house in parking lot

Mennonite Disaster Service will take it to Houma, La., on two trailers.

Lowell Brown

Youth and adults worked together to build a Mennonite Disaster Service house in a parking lot at the San José 2007 convention. It was then dismantled and trucked to a family in Louisiana.

More than 250 volunteers built a house in a parking lot at the San José 2007 convention; it was dedicated in a ceremony on July 5.

The house, constructed of panels that are screwed together for easy assembling at a remote site, went up at a pace that surprised everyone. Many of the nails were pounded by young people new to the world of hard hats and hammers.

"It is a house built with human hands but with the love of many, and we dedicate it to Christ," said Kevin King, executive director for Mennonite Disaster Service.

Steve Cheramie Risingsun, who lives in the affected area, offered the prayer of dedication, saying that while he lost all his photos in Hurricane Katrina, stories are more powerful than photographs. And while MDS has taken lots of pictures of the affected families and homes, "the stories are infinite among my people of these Mennonites who come in to help," he said.

Volunteers started deconstructing the house right afterward, preparing it for a week-long trip to Houma, La., on two trailers. Within three weeks, Lydia and Mac Lodrigue and their family should be able to move in.

The house is the fifth new house built by MDS, although it has refurbished more than 200 other houses.—*James N. Weber for mPress*

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Executive Board wants to be smaller

Unresolved issue: how racial/ethnic representatives come to the board

In anticipation of a six-year review of Mennonite Church USA's organization, the Executive Board decided to take a straw poll in the delegate assembly with two questions related to the board's structure. Results of the poll have not been announced. The board held a four-hour meeting in San José, Calif., on July 2, before the biennial churchwide convention opened later that day.

The first question asked whether delegates would support a change to Mennonite Church USA bylaws to reduce the Executive Board from the current 20-21 members to 12-15 members. Doing so, said the board, "has operational advantages providing greater economy and efficiency."

The second question related to how long a moderator can serve. Currently the moderator serves one two-year term. Delegates were asked whether they would allow possible reappointment(s) by the delegate body for two additional terms. Doing so would "provide greater continuity of leadership."

But it was neither of those issues that sparked an energetic 30-minute debate. Instead the board looked at an issue left unresolved by the integration process that created Mennonite Church USA six years ago: how representatives from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups will come to the Executive Board in the future.

"If the racial/ethnic groups appoint," said Samuel Lopez, representing Iglesia Menonita Hispana (Hispanic Mennonite Church), "they have some power. If they nominate to the Leadership Discernment Committee (LDC), they don't have the power."

Ron Byler, Mennonite Church USA associate executive director and the staff person who works for the LDC, said the bylaws currently call for both processes, and it has been "awkward."

Leslie Francisco III, representing the African-American Mennonite Association, explained why the racial/ethnic groups feel so strongly about being able to appoint rather than nominate.

"Racial/ethnic people are spread thinly across the church," he said. "There could be a racial/ethnic person in a predominantly Anglo church who meets all the criteria [for appointment by the LDC] but has no connection to racial/ethnic groups or to other racial/ethnic people."

Francisco said the racial/ethnic groups do not want representatives they select to be placed in a pool with several others selected by the LDC with "no opportunity to review the other people."

Mennonite Church USA executive director Jim Schrag said the issue "is going to be a discussion in the board during the next biennium," and the matter did not need to be settled in order for the delegates' July 3 straw vote.

The next biennium was on the minds of many board members as they said goodbye to 10 people central to the board's leadership since the inception of Mennonite Church USA in 2001: J. Daryl Byler, Cleon Claassen, Francisco, Kevin Goertzen, James Harder, Duane Oswald, Jane Hoober Peifer, Lois Preheim, Edwin Rempel and outgoing moderator Roy Williams.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Everett Thomas

Ed Rempel and other outgoing Executive Board members addressed incoming board members on July 2. The group of 10 gave an aggregate of 73 years to Mennonite Church USA leadership.

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Steve Schrag, Director of Advancement,
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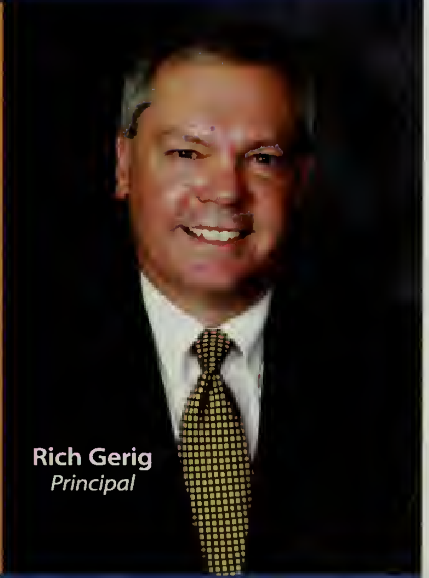

Rich Gerig
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Lots of need in California's Silicon Valley

2,812 conventioneers participate in Servant Projects at 50 locations.

The high-tech, fast-wealth image of the Silicon Valley doesn't mesh easily with preconceived notions of neediness. Yet as Arloa Bontrager learned, great need exists in San José, Calif., too.

Bontrager, who directed Servant Projects at the San José 2007, said that when she first visited San José, "my initial reaction was, How are we going to do service projects here? But the last time I was there I saw homeless people, and I found that if you look and dig a bit you find the need."

With nearly 50 locations for Servant Projects, 2,812 Mennonites signed up to spend part of their convention week giving time and energy to help others. The majority of those were young people pitching in to do things such as weed community gardens that raise food for the hungry, plug into activities at a Boys and Girls Club, play games with seniors at nursing homes, help out at a food bank or do home maintenance for clients of a center for the blind.

Agencies they helped included Sacred Heart. It runs a food bank, a clothes closet (see photo below), computer training classes and many other resources for lower-income people in San José.

"It was amazing how many people they serve—10,000 a month—in San José. It gave me a really different perspective on some of the issues here," Bontrager said.

Although liability issues put up some especially difficult barriers in California, Bontrager said agencies that came on board have done so enthusiastically. "People have been really excited, saying, 'Wow, I can't believe you want to do this.'"—*mPress*

Silas Crews

Gabriel Brunk of Harrisonburg, Va., sorts inventory at a clothes closet as part of his Servant Project experience..

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WORKERS

Brown, Bernice, was licensed for specific ministry as associated minister of evangelism at Church Without Walls, Elkhart, Ind., on June 3.

Fox, Donald L., was ordained as associate pastor at Mountain Spring Mennonite Church, East Earl, Pa., on April 15.

Guengerich, Vernard, ended a term as pastor at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind., on May 31.

Houser, J. William, was installed as associate pastor at Lebanon Christian Fellowship, Lebanon, Pa., on May 20.

Kelleher, Linda L., was licensed for specific ministry as co-pastor of Friendship Mennonite Church, Penns Grove, N.J., on June 11.

Kennel, Ron, ended a term as pastor at Clinton Brick Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on May 31.

Kingley, Chris, ended a term as pastor at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind., on May 31.

Rodriguez-Lora, Nancy, was ordained as pastor at True Vine Tabernacle, Elkhart, Ind., on June 10.

Troyer, John, ended a term as pastor at Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Sturgis, Mich., on June 30.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Beidler, Melina Kay, June 17, to Lyle and Melissa Spory Beidler, Denver, Pa.

Bevington, Kaelyn Elaine, May 20, to Mark and Kimberly Mayer Bevington, Groton, Conn.

Blackburn, Seamus Paul, May 17, to Lee and Kirstin Mead Blackburn, South Bend, Ind.

Conrad, Drew Michael, June 5, to Nathan and Janet Thome Conrad, Washington, Iowa.

Degan, Matthew Carlos, Nov. 4, 2006, received for adoption May 11, by Michael and Becky Degan, Akron, Pa.

Dudenhefer, Hannah Elyse and **Kelcie Marie** (twins), May 12, to David and Jen Urich Dudenhefer, Erie, Colo.

Graber, Elyssa Marie, April 12, to Troy and Catharine Featherstun Graber, Wayland, Iowa.

Helling, Caleb Duane, May 25, to T.J. and Polly Niehage Helling, Oologah, Okla.

Herrera, Adalyn Diane, June 2, to Pete and Andrea Weaver Herrera, Tyler, Texas.

King, Ezra Levi, June 25, to Samuel and Danelle Weaver King, Indianapolis, Ind.

Kratz, Madeleine Marie, June 25, to Jeremy and Leah Emery Kratz, Harrisonburg, Va.

Landis, Myra Elizabeth, June 17, to Eric and Bethany Souder Landis, Souderton, Pa.

Longacre, Gabriella Breeze, June 4, to Kyle and Maggie Harris Longacre, Harleysville, Pa.

Marchand, Nathan David, April 18, to Jason and Melanie Henson Marchand, Lafayette, Ind.

Moshier, Landon Peter, June 5, to Jason and Laura Yoder Moshier, Indianapolis, Ind.

Miller, Clayton William, June 23, to Josh and Stephanie Achen Miller, Wayland, Iowa.

Miller, Jonah Lee, June 30, to Kerry and Saundra Parrish Miller, Lafayette, Ind.

Mullen, Will Harrison, June 10, to Drew and Lisa Mullen, Lancaster, Pa.

Penner, Devin John, May 3, to Steven and Faith Meyer Penner, Windom, Kan.

Swartzendruber, Noelle Paige, May 11, to Nick and Jaime Swartzendruber, Boulder, Colo.

Schrock, Carter Daniel, June 18, to Jeffrey and Ann Mereness Schrock, Columbus, Ohio.

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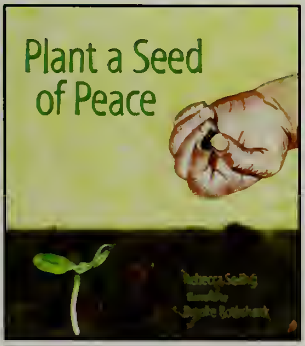

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"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

Schrock, Tori Jo, June 19, to Aaron and April Blick Schrock, Kalona, Iowa.

Springer, Anika Dipti, June 21, to Ryan and Nisha Subaiya Springer, Elkhart, Ind.

Stahl, Jack Thomas, June 7, to Jason and Tara Yeackley Stahl, Seward, Neb.

Stutzman, Kate Mikel, June 8, to Kelly and Stephanie Kelly Stutzman, Sarasota, Fla.

Wenger, Madison Paige, June 29, to Ben and Lesley McJunkin Wenger, Akron, Pa.

White, Wade Allen, June 14, to Kris and Megan Mowery White, Hesston, Kan.

MARRIAGES

Berkey/Pickerill: Christy Berkey, Goshen, Ind., and Travis Pickerill, Milford, Neb., June 30, at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Eberly/Freed: Jennifer Eberly, Harrisonburg, Va., and Timothy Freed, Harrisonburg, June 23, at Cornerstone Church, Broadway, Va.

Evans/Hartman: Kurt Evans, DeMotte, Ind., and Lana Hartman, Elkhart, Ind., June 23, at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Friesen/Unrau: Bernie Friesen, Altona, Manitoba, and Dorothy Unrau, Winkler, Manitoba, June 16, at Altona Park.

Harmych/Steria: Cheyenne Harmych, Lowville, N.Y., and Jacob Steria, Lowville, June 30, at Lowville Mennonite Church.

Kiehl/Thomas: Shawn Kiehl, Omaha, Neb., and Doug Thomas, Milford, Neb., June 16, at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Kopina/Rhodes: John Kopina, Jr., Mansfield, Ohio, and Christina Rhodes, Topeka, Kan., April 21, at Asbury United Methodist Church, Prairie Village, Kan.

Lederman/Leichty: Joel Lederman, Middlebury, Ind., and Annerose Leichty, Wakarusa, Ind., June 16, at the home of the groom, Middlebury.

Lint/Overholt: Shana Lint, Royersford, Pa., and Justin Overholt, Souderton, Pa., May 27, at Cedarville United Methodist Church, Royersford.

Miller/Yoder: Brad Miller, Riverside, Iowa, and Jessica A. Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va., May 26, at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg.

DEATHS

Apger, Lorabel Tolles, 72, Archbold, Ohio, died June 30 of long-term complications of pneumonia. Spouse: Robert Apger, Sr. (deceased). Parents: Jay and Clara Marsh Tolles. Children: Robert, Jr., Deborah Potter, Teresa Wyse, Pat Gilbert, David, Lori Lane; 11 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 6 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Burkholder, Eula Catherine Rhodes, 85, Harrisonburg, Va., died June 27. Spouse: Charles Edward Burkholder (deceased). Parents: Oscar J. and Ina Heatwole Rhodes. Children: Polly Fravel. Funeral: June 30 at Crestwood, Strite Auditorium, Harrisonburg.

Godshall, Eva Halteman, 94, Telford, Pa., died June 24. Spouse: Willis D. Godshall (deceased). Parents: Henry S. and Lizzie Bergey Halteman. Children: Jean Kolb, Betty Derstine, Earl G., Mary Lou Landis; 11 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 28 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Franconia, Pa.

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Graber, Lavern, 83, Wayland, Iowa, died June 3. Spouse: N. Elizabeth Schroll Graber (deceased). Spouse: Ruth Leichty Graber (deceased). Parents: Peter and Magdelina Wenger Graber. Children: Leland, Duane, Sheldon, Rita Davis, Lynnita Hunt, Adrian, Treva Walsh, Jocolyn Graber; 31 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 6 at Wayland Mennonite Church.

Hershey, Harold B., 76, Souderton, Pa., died June 11. Spouse: Elizabeth Moyer Hershey. Parents: John and Anna Burkhart Hershey. Children: Dawn Stanislaw, Steven, Doug, Kim Richter; nine grandchildren. Funeral: June 15 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Ladwig, Selma Jantz, 88, Ponca City, Okla., died June 25. Spouse: Emmett Ladwig (deceased). Parents: Ferdinand and Anna Friesen Jantz. Children: Vicki Rogers, Debra Hignite; three grandchildren. Funeral: June 29 at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola, Okla.

McNiel, Sylvia Ann Roth, 91, Lincoln, Neb., died June 29. Spouse: Francis McNiel (deceased). Parents: Edward and Emma Yeackley Roth. Children: Barbara Mast, Kenneth Owen, four grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 3 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford, Neb.

Pasnick, Raymond G., 62, Elmhurst, Ill., died June 23. Spouse: Ann Schmidt Pasnick. Parents: Raymond W. and Margaret Pasnick. Children: Katherine Pasnick, Susan Brinton, Nicholas. Celebration of life service: June 30 at Lombard Mennonite Church, Lombard, Ill.

Reimer, H.E. "Harry," 92, Inman, Kan., died May 29. Spouse: Bertha Stucky Reimer (deceased). Parents: Heinrich F. "Henry" and Katie Baergen Reimer. Children: Jay, Sara Farley, Debra Burgess; eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 4 at Inman Mennonite Church.

Reinford, Wilmer L., 90, Creamery, Pa., died June 4. Spouse: Margaret Reinford. Parents: Frank and Bertha Landes Reinford. Children: Mae K. Reinford, Ruth K. Keppley, Linda K. Watson, Ida R. Proco; three grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Funeral: June 7 at Wellspring Church of Skippack, Skippack, Pa.

Richard, Catherine Viola Yoder, 88, Wayland, Iowa, died June 21 following a long illness. Spouse: Oscar Daniel Richard (deceased). Parents: Eli J. and Annie Bissey Yoder. Children: Daniel, Dean; nine grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 25 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

Schrock, Marjorie Mae Beck, 89, Leo, Ind., died June 28. Spouse: Clayton Schrock. Parents: Samuel C. and Amanda Beck. Children: Rick S., Sharon J. Meyers, Shirley J. Johnson; 10 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: July 2 at North Leo Mennonite Church.

Stoltzfus, Lena G. Stoltzfus, 98, Gap, Pa., died June 17. Spouse: Rev. Abner G. Stoltzfus (deceased). Parents: Rufus and Matilda Blank Stoltzfus. Children: Dr. Virgil D., Dr. Richard G., Marlene Hershey, Ronald, Janice Carpener; 13 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: June 23 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Stoltzfus, Lois E., 80, Lancaster, Pa., died June 18. Parents: Amos K. and Ruth Stoltzfus. Funeral: June 23 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Sutter, Lyle Ervin, 82, Flanagan, Ill., died June 10 of cancer. Spouse: Merna L. Ringenberg Sutter. Parents: Ervin H. and F. Marie Litwiller Sutter. Children: Kay Kreider, Donald, Thomas, Jane Sutter, Mary Sutter; four grandchildren. Funeral: Prairieview Mennonite Church, Flanagan.

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Dr. John Stahl-Wert is keynote speaker at Spruce Lake Retreat's ***Leadership Training Event*** Oct. 10-12, 2007: "Harness raw potential for extraordinary results." Call 800-822-7505, www.sprucelake.org.

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks ***full-time representative to the United States and Canada*** to provide leadership for EMM's long-term work in these countries. Qualifications: cross-cultural and church planting experience, heart for prayer, leadership and organizational skills, ability to share vision and recruit. Begins Sept. 4; application deadline July 27. Contact Jeanette Hunt jeanetteh@emm.org or 717-898-2251.

English conversation teachers needed. **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

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Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore. ***Assistant principal/dean of student life***: This full-time position is responsible to provide leadership for student welfare and discipline. This includes supporting staff responsible for spiritual life, extracurricular activities, dorm life and student leadership programs and teaching responsibilities. Western seeks a leader with a strong commitment to Christ, a passion for spiritual growth among students and good communication, organization and interpersonal relationship skills. Starting date: Aug. 1.

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Western offers an excellent, Christ-centered education for grades 6-12 and is located on 45 beautiful acres within the Willamette Valley of the Pacific Northwest. Contact information: 866-343-9378, office@westernmennoniteschool.org, or 9045 Wallace Rd. NW, Salem, OR 97304

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Salem Mennonite Church, located near the growing community of Tofield, Alta. (45 minutes Southeast of Edmonton), is seeking a ***lead pastor*** to minister to our congregation of 125 people. The successful candidate will have previous pastoral experience and/or a bachelor of theology degree or equivalent. Compensation will be commensurate with qualifications. Interested people should forward their resumés to: Carla Fendelet, Secretary, Salem Mennonite Church, Box 56, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0; fax: 780-662-0106; email cgfen@telus.net.

Park View Federal Credit Union, Harrisonburg, Va., is seeking a ***chief financial officer*** to provide strategic leadership of the fiscal functions of our growing credit union. Visit www.pvfcu.org for a position description or contact Yvonne Boettger, HR Manager, for more information at 540-434-6444 or careers@pvfcu.org.

Hesston College seeks ***vice president of development***. Responsible to lead development team in fundraising for annual fund, capital campaigns and endowment. Qualities include integrity, relational skills, marketing mentality, passion for the mission of Hesston College, knowledge of Mennonite Church USA and successful fund-raising and/or marketing experience. Reports to the president and is a member of the administrative council. Open until position is filled. Send resumé and letter of interest to Howard Keim, President, Hesston College, P.O. Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062. Questions? Contact President Keim at 620-327-8233 or email howardk@hesston.edu. EOE.

Consistently voted the area's top retirement community, **Dock Woods Community** seeks a ***director of accounting services***. Reporting to the CFO, this position is responsible for overseeing all accounting and financial reporting for the organization. Strong interpersonal, leadership and communication skills are necessary, along with 5-7 years of supervisory experience in an accounting or financial setting. A bachelor's degree in accounting or a related field is required. Dock Woods offers competitive salary and benefits. Interested candidates should fax resumés along with salary requirements to 215-565-2413 or email eprice@dockwoods.com.

Love nature and working with children and adults? Do you have leadership skills you would like to use in a new way? **Camp Friedenswald** is seeking a person to serve as ***outdoor learning assistant*** to start August 2007. This is a voluntary service position with stipend, housing, meals and insurance. Come and join us in the Peaceful Woods. Contact Justin Weaver, 269-476-9744 or justin@friedenswald.org.

Youth ministry opportunity. **Salem Mennonite Church**, a rural church near Tofield, Alta., is seeking a ***youth pastor***. Qualifications: minimum of a Bible school diploma, musical capabilities an asset, have vehicle, willing to work "unusual hours." The salary will be commensurate with the successful candidate's experience. Forward resumés to Carla Fendelet, SMC, Box 56, Tofield, AB TOB 4J0; fax 780-662-0106; email cgfen@telus.net.

Penn View Christian School has a ***middle school teaching position*** open August 2007. The position requires that the candidate have teaching credentials in social studies. Additionally the candidate will teach some middle school computer classes. Penn View offers a Christ-centered, academically excellent education for 650 students in early childhood through eighth grade. If interested, please go to our Web site, www.pennview.org, download the application and send it to the attention of Robert Rutt, Executive Director, 420 Godshall Road, Souderton, PA 18964.

Mount Royal Mennonite Church is inviting applications for the position of ***associate pastor***. The Mount Royal congregation was established in 1963 and is one of several Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Saskatoon. The person(s) in this full-time position will be part of a pastoral team with responsibilities particularly relating to ministry to youth in a multi generational, multi cultural congregation of about 250 members. Anabaptist faith orientation and training are strongly preferred. This person will have the skills, attitude and vision to bring a leadership role to working with the youth ministry team. Interested people are invited to visit our Web site for a complete job description and to submit a resumé to: MRMC Associate Pastor Search Committee, 610 Avenue O North, Saskatoon, SK S7L 2V3, or Attn. Len Andres at lbandres@shaw.ca or www.mount.sasktelwebsite.net. Applicants are to respond by July 31.

Philadelphia Mennonite High School (grades 9-12) seeks applicants for the following positions for the 2007-08 school year: ***full-time science instructor*** (chemistry/physics); ***full-time social studies instructor***. Please send the resumé to Barbara Moses, principal, Philadelphia Mennonite High School, 860 N. 24th St., Philadelphia, PA 19130; fax 215-769-4063; email mos147@comcast.net.

MCC urgent opening: ***Resource Generation Network Director***, Akron, Pa. Needed Sept. 17, 2007. Gives leadership to the resource generation network consisting of staff in MCC offices across Canada and the United States. Establishes standards in fund-raising, setting goals and building network capacities. Experience in nonprofit fund-raising with excellent skills in communication and management required. Candidates of a gender or ethnic group typically underrepresented in this type of MCC assignment are encouraged to apply. Contact Kathy Jackson at krj@mcc.org or call 717-859-1151 for job description and further information.

Mennonite Mission Network seeks applicants for the following openings: ***bilingual (Spanish/English) writer and director for Europe***. Position descriptions can be seen at www.mennonitemission.net. Click on Get Involved/Staff Opportunities. Interested parties should call Linda Krueger, Human Resource Assistant at 574-523-3009 or email LindaK@mennonitemission.net.

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Lowell Brown

More than 100 San José 2007 convention participants joined a July 4 public witness focusing on immigation issues confronting the United States.

100-plus in prayer walk for immigration

July 4 public witness includes enactment of 'coyote transfer' in car trunk.

Bearing the messages, "We are all immigrants" and, "God's love has no borders," more than 100 people participated in a public witness on July 4—the hottest day of the week during the San José 2007 convention.

Spanish speakers, including Juan Montes, executive director for Iglesia Menonita Hispana (Hispanic Mennonite Church), engaged Hispanic people in conversation along the way. At least one family—immigrants three years ago—joined the march en route around Plaza de Cesar Chavez to show their appreciation for the just immigration reforms proposed by the prayer walkers.

Preceding the walk, participants read a litany from 1 John 2 and asked God to bless Sharon Waltner, Mennonite Church USA's moderator-elect. Several people told stories of fear and hope. Virgo Handojo, pastor of Jemaat Kristen Indonesia Anugrah in Sierra Madre, said many Indonesian families in the United States live in fear that immigration officers will take them away.

Father Jon Pedigo, director of immigration issues for the Diocese of San José, said there is a deep sadness that the immigration bill in the Senate was killed on June 28. He predicted there will be a lot more deportations and that nothing will happen in the House for at least five years.

Immigrant workers are not a drain on the economy, he said.

"The church has sat on the fence too long," said Chuwang Pam, pastor of Los Angeles Faith Chapel. He encouraged political involvement to "elect righteous people" and make just laws. "Jesus was the greatest politician we've ever had," he said.

Montes told of how his son is being detained, suspected of illegal immigration. A positive way the family is responding to this tragedy is by sending Bibles and helping Spanish-speaking detainees communicate with loved ones.

One group made art for the "border fence" that walkers carried. Another created new verses to a song and a third made posters. Krista Zimmerman of the Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office discussed the Senate legislation.

Another group enacted a coyote transferring immigrants in the trunk of a car. A small group of European Americans told immigration stories and what they knew of the ways their ancestors displaced Native Americans, who in some cases had been forced west to make way for European immigrants.—*Susan Balzer for mPress*

Jesus was the greatest politician we've ever had.
—Chuwang Pam

FILM

Fuerza, a 30-minute documentary by four Goshen (Ind.) College students, was shown at San José 2007. The film shows the connection between Apan, Hidalgo, Mexico and Goshen. As many as half the people in Apan go to Goshen for work, then send money back to their families. The students interview Goshen civic leaders and people in Apan. One spokesman in the film says it's a complex issue, but the film doesn't present much complexity, due in part to its length.—*Gordon Houser*

A letter to the people of Mennonite Church USA

We are witnesses to God at work through Mennonite higher education. We are Barry, Jim, Loren, Jim, Howard, Nelson and Carlos. God has called each of us to work in our own setting—and together—to help people discover life's greatest joy: to know and follow Christ.

Mennonites are part of a five-century witness to the radical discipleship of the Gospels. We believe that the world needs the integration of heart and mind that Mennonites seek, and that we need to learn from others.

The passion for education that formed our institutions generations ago is undiminished today, part of Mennonite Church USA's commitment to the church and the world. We invite you to join us, and we promise you:

Spiritual growth and a Christian world view. Christ is our center. From it, students can build a foundation of values and commitments in a complex world.

We support the work of the Holy Spirit in our students by inviting them to personally know Christ and follow him daily in life. In partnership with home and congregation, our institutions are places where people may embrace God's redemptive work within them.

Mennonites are world Christians. Our campuses are transnational in scope and multicultural by conviction and presence. We believe great minds think differently and that encountering those differences prepares our students to serve the world community and boldly advocate for a Christian world view.

Intellectual growth and leadership training. A comprehensive liberal arts education requires students to engage in spiritual discernment. Our academic programs feature valuable content and excellent instruction by knowledgeable and accessible faculty who are themselves committed to Christ.

We call forth not only intellectual gifts, but also the development of personal mission. Our goal is to provide students with the best content available and to teach them how to think and how to lead with integrity.

A supportive, lifelong community. Our campuses are part of the body of Christ, supportive communities where knowledge, skills and character are shaped. Students are treated as individuals and made to feel welcome and valued.

We believe God created us to live relationally. Christ-centered relationships formed on our campuses can be cross-generational and life-long.

An affordable education. We want to remove cost as a barrier for anyone who wishes to be part of our institutions. Few students pay the "list price" of tuition. About 98.6 percent of our students receive some form of financial aid—grants, loans and on-campus work compensation, along with congregational and area conference support, which we match.

From 1998-2004, the proportion of students receiving institutional grants rose from 93 to 97 percent, reducing real out-of-pocket family expenses. Our strong programs allow students to graduate on time.

Alumni of Mennonite educational institutions of all levels are likely to be involved and active in the church. They are leaders of the denomination, area conferences and congregations. Day-to-day, week-to-week, our institutions benefit families and congregations through leadership and resources.

We want you and your children to be part of Mennonite higher education. We invite you to visit *www.MennoniteEducation.org* and share your reflections. Thank you for the work you have entrusted to us, and may God bless your own work and witness.

In joyful service,

Barry C. Bartel
Jim Harder

Loren E. Swartzendruber
Jim Brenneman

Howard Keim
J. Nelson Kraybill

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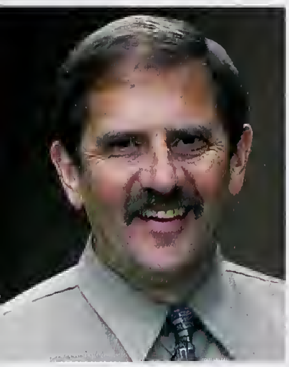


Everett J. Thomas

The train is leaving the station

So what difference will it make that Mennonite Church USA had a positive experience during the biennial convention in San José, Calif., and where do we go from here? Two answers: This gathering strengthened our unity. And at a churchwide level, leaders are more oriented to the future than to taking care of loose ends from the merger that created Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada six years ago.

The San José 2007 convention may also have answered a question some people were asking: Is there room in this church for someone like me?

That was the question Mennonite Church USA executive director Jim Schrag predicted would be the "common but semiconscious question for which we are seeking an answer" at this year's gathering (Leadership, June 19).

My primary assignment was to cover the delegate sessions. I did not hear anyone ask the question in exactly that way, but the tenor of the convention did seem to indicate a shift from the Charlotte 2005 and Atlanta 2003 gatherings.

Those gatherings were held in the early days after Mennonite Church USA was born. Many people came to those conventions expecting to see the versions of Mennonite Church USA that were the ideals in their minds.

We know better who we are and are starting to be comfortable with the church we have become.

But what we have cannot match all those disparate ideals. In the meantime, it has become clear that the train is leaving the station: Mennonite Church USA is what it is, and it is doing well. So now we need to either get on board or be left standing on the platform.

My take on the 2007 question: Is there room in this church for me if Mennonite Church USA is not exactly what I imagined? That is a shift: Instead of me creating a church in my own image, I need to accept who we are and decide if I want to join in. If so, then I join with good will.

There is integrity and humility in this question. Instead of people insisting on a church that matches their ideals, they accept the church that has emerged and find ways to join in.

The leaders of this church also have established credibility and earned trust. It was evident in at least two ways. First, their proposal that Mennonite Church USA join an ecumenical fellowship called Christian Churches Together passed with heavy support and few concerns raised (page 18). Second, a proposal to keep working at a health insurance plan for pastors and church workers received strong support as well (page 18).

Such support is probably the result of our leaders listening well. To that end, new moderator Sharon Waltner told the delegate assembly in a brief inaugural speech that her vision for the next two years is, "Listening. Really listening."

There were signs that the church will also venture into new fields in the next biennium—and some of those fields are not well defined. One example was a resolution that emerged from the floor; it asked Mennonite Church USA to begin a process that helps Mennonites think about what it means to live in the world's wealthiest and most powerful nation (page 19).

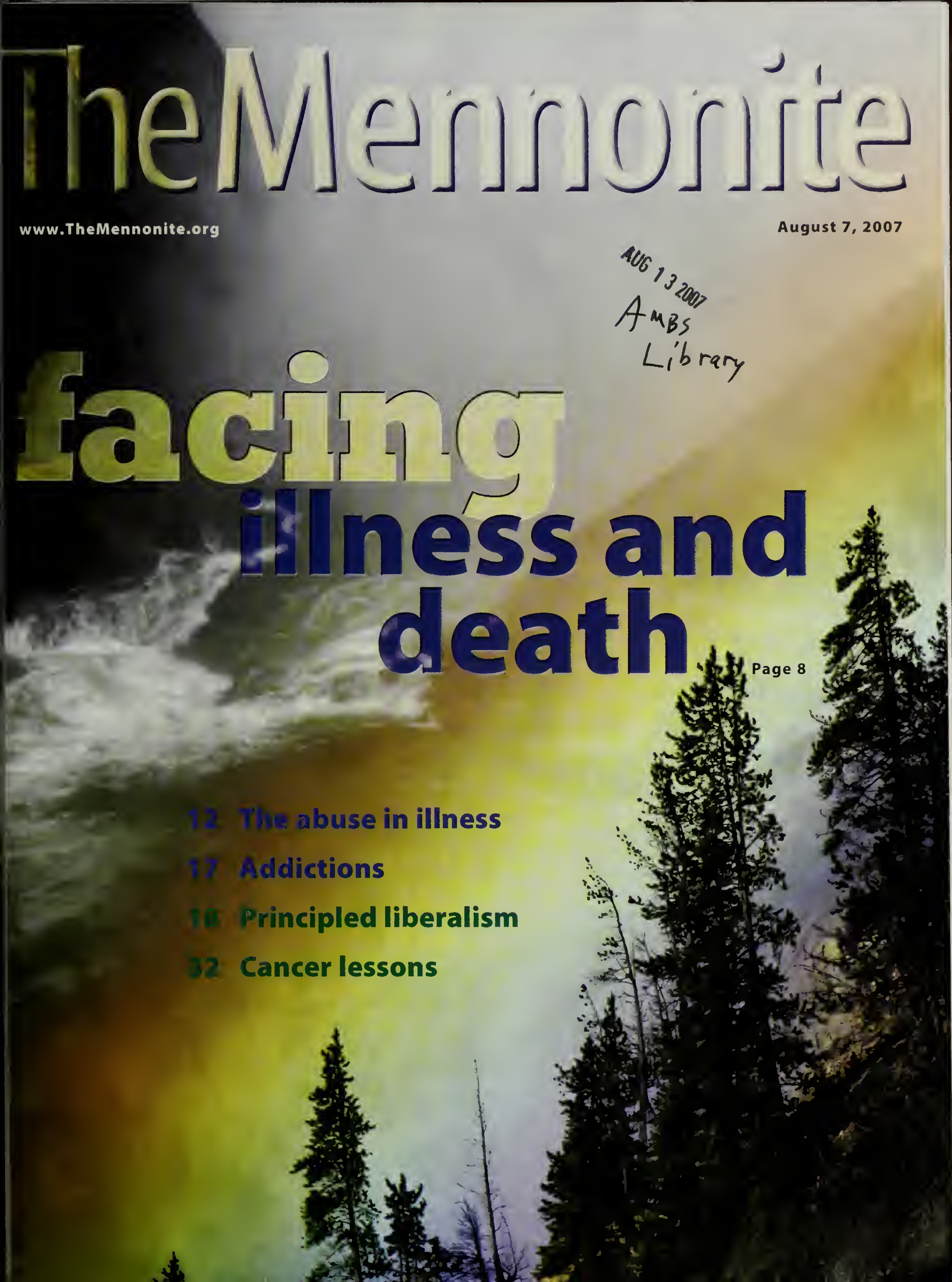
The involvement of young adults, however, was the most encouraging sign of the future. I estimate that there were approximately 75 delegates under the age of 30, and most were fully engaged in their table conversations.

"We've experienced a shift," Roxy Allen said during a special presentation from young adults (page 15). "Our voices are being heard."

I came home from the San José 2007 convention sensing that the church has momentum and is melding. We don't know exactly where God will lead our six-year-old denomination, but we know better who we are and are starting to be comfortable with the church we have become.

Some may still wonder whether there is room on the train for them. According to everything we saw and heard July 2-6, the answer is yes—for all who are willing to help Mennonite Church USA "live the call" so we all can join in the work God is already doing in the world.—*ejt*

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org



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Gluttony: insatiable consumption

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Living in the consumptive affluence of the United States makes it hard to escape or recognize my gluttonous habits. I live in the one-third of the world that is rich. We use twice as much energy per person as do our counterparts in England or Germany. We use 351 times as much energy as the average Ethiopian. U.S. citizens consume almost five times as much grain per person as people in developing countries.

The Christians in Corinth lived in a similar consumer culture. Corinth was the place for great food, entertainment, kinky sex and raucous worship at temples for the gods of the sea.

The Christians in Corinth, like us, had a lot to learn about sexual sanity and Last Supper sobriety. Their new Christian worship services reflected past gluttonous habits of pursuing the next adrenaline high. Seeking an ecstatic encounter with God, worshipers babbled in unintelligible languages. Wealthier members arrived early for the Lord's Supper and gorged themselves on food and drink. Some were even drunk at Communion. Then when the poorer folk arrived, who had worked long and late, the food was gone.

Identifying gluttony: Overeating is the most common practice of gluttony, but natural appetites dominate us in other ways: gambling, smoking and drinking alcohol come to mind. Many things that are good in themselves, but gluttony is getting more than enough of good. What is enough? I know runners so addicted that they ruin knees and hips. Stock markets, video games, movies, sports, music collections, technical gadgets, clothes and cars all have gluttonous potential. The overindulgent pursuit of any pleasure is gluttony. And my daughter might say to me, "Dad, you are gluttonous about work."

First Corinthians 6:12 begins, "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial." One criterion for assessing gluttony is, Is this behavior beneficial? Not only for my body but for my relationships?

A second criterion follows: "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything." Is this behavior dominating my life? Am I obsessively preoccupied with this hobby, this sport, with drinking or eating?

Overcoming gluttony: Naming the insatiable desire and the consumptive behavior of gluttony is the first step toward freedom. I resist that term. But until we name the preoccupations of the mind and the accompanying behaviors as gluttony, we are not going to progress spiritually. We have to call sin sin. First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins." It doesn't say, "If we confess our little idiosyncrasies." If we confess sins, God not only forgives but goes to work purifying us from that sin. God even purifies us from "all unrighteousness."

Second, get preoccupied with God and God's work in the world. Gluttony tries to fill an emptiness in our life. Comfort food soothes feelings of loneliness, shame or rejection.

In Matthew 6, Jesus says folks are preoccupied with food, drink and clothes. Fill that hole with something else. Matthew 6:33 says, "Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met. Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow" (*The Message*).

Gluttony can be overcome. The God who raised Jesus to life can raise you to new life. Overcoming sin is not about sheer willpower but God's power transforming us when we name sin and refocus our life on God's work in the world. TM

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False religious systems

Dennis Byler, missionary to Spain under Mennonite Mission Network, does not believe in "The Myth of Justified Violence" (Feb. 20). However, he apparently does believe in some of the myths the ungodly historian wrote about the origin of agriculture, animal husbandry, warfare and religion.

According to Genesis, Adam, the first man ever to live on earth, was an agriculturalist, for he tended the Garden of Eden, which God had planted, until he was expelled from it because of the sin of disobeying God's direct command. And even after that, Adam still tilled the ground to grow food. Adam's first son, Cain, also worked the ground.

Adam's second son, Abel, was a shepherd. Both sons were religious, for they brought sacrifices to God. Since Adam and Eve had communed with God before they sinned, they knew God and, forgiven by God, taught their sons about God and sacrificing to him.

Cain offered some of the fruit of his working the ground. When God accepted Abel's animal sacrifice but rejected Cain's sacrifice, Cain was angry and jealous of Abel, so he killed him. And that is the real story of war. Romans 1:18-25 is a commentary on the growth of false religious systems. —*Anna V. Liechty, Berne, Ind.*

How we support the war

"How We Support the War" (Editorial, June 19) said things all of us Mennonites and all Christians need to hear. I'm appalled that half of American Mennonites identify themselves as Republicans. Did Jesus identify himself with any part of the governments of his day? I'm glad you chose to name some names.—*Chris Wickey, Engadine, Mich.*

The legacy of CPS

I enjoyed your June 19 issue. I, too, am a Civilian Public Service graduate. I spent about two years in an "asylum." I am now 87. In my teens I read through the Bible. I grew up in a Mennonite family and church in Mountain Lake, Minn. I felt CPS was the only way to go. I would do it again if necessary.—*Willard Friesen, Mountain Lake, Minn.*

I am 87, a lifetime Mennonite, and I served four years in Civilian Public Service. Because of my experience I am discouraged by the emphases of the CPS articles and J. Nelson Kraybill's article (July 3). I didn't go into CPS because I wanted to be faithful to Mennonite teachings (though it certainly was a concern), because of any social reform program or because of whether or not the war was just. You cannot have a sound doctrine of peace starting where these articles begin—a concern among the nations for secular peace.

Philippians 2:5-11 and the Sermon on the Mount are important to me. I hope the legacy of CPS is learning obedience to Jesus in every part of our lives and that God is sovereign over all human activities. Most Mennonite CPS workers were motivated this way; obedience to Christ is the best legacy we can give.—*Mark Moyer, Davidsville, Pa.*

And on earth peace

As a former Mennonite Church USA pastor (Hyattsville [Md.] Mennonite Church) and now a religious education teacher and associate pastor at Kodaikanal International School and Church in India, I appreciated J. Nelson Kraybill's article "And on Earth Peace" (July 3).

As a pastor located in the "belly of the beast" (Washington, D.C., area), my preaching, teaching and activism often focused on the American Empire's attempt to cloak its ungodly values and practices in Christian language and images. In India, I no longer live in the midst of empire, but in my teaching and preaching I still need to show non-Christians that the values and practices of the United States are different from the values and practices of the kingdom of God. Indeed, Jesus' peace goes far deeper and broader than any supposed Pax Americana.—*Joe Roos, Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, India*

Missional and Mennonite

"Missional and Mennonite" (July 3) brought to mind the Vatican statement that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true church because it has the "means of salvation" and that all other churches are inferior because they cannot trace back their ancestry and leadership to the original disciples. I agree with Roth that we need to keep our distinctiveness and be more assertive in what we believe and why. And we should be more dis-

IN THIS ISSUE

Illness and death are two things we all face at some point. In this issue you can read about facing cancer treatment with Scripture, song and prayer (page 8), about a courageous 20-year-old facing death (page 10), about how not to support a person with an illness (page12), about why we should thank God regularly for all that nourishes us rather than just at meals (page 14) and about dealing with people suffering addictions (page 17). Our faith calls us to face all of life with the awareness of God's presence (page 32). "All of life" includes our tendency toward gluttony (page 2), our eating habits (page 30), our search for marriage partners (page 19) and how we relate to God's creation (pages 21, 22).—*Acting editor* cerning about which denominations or systems of faith we see reflecting Christian values and lifestyles. However, we need to be cautious as to how we express our "missional" stance and how strongly we carry out our evangelistic pursuits.

The Anabaptist faith has a strong future. Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, I do not look back in our ancestry and lineage for authenticity but if we are living an authentic Christian life now. As long as we dialogue on what direction we are going and hold to what we believe to be true, our future is assured.—*Carole Boshart, Eugene, Ore.*

I appreciate John D. Roth's treatment of the uniqueness of our church's emphasis on the call to wholehearted discipleship and that the life of this identity with the needy of society is "not for loners" but for those open to life in a community of faith (July 3). I agree that this be guarded as a value not to be left slip to the wayside.

An absence of the core of the way of Jesus is found in most of the creeds of "Christendom," which hop from "born of the Virgin Mary" to "crucified under Pontius Pilate and raised from the dead." What Jesus lived and taught is foundational in our tradition. It is up to us to keep it as a value in the content of our teachings and practice. And though the perpetuation of our theological gift may affect our growth in numbers, let us take heart that the challenge confronts every new generation.—*Paul H. Martin, Akron, Pa.*

The Mennonite church in North America grew because of large families, denominational loyalty and young people remaining in their home communities. These three conditions no longer apply in Mennonite Church USA.

However, Anabaptist theology and biblical interpretation—including peace, justice, community and service—get serious consideration by those outside the Mennonite church, even those outside the body of Christ. Many people resonate with these values, especially in an age of violence, economic disparity, political paralysis and loss of meaning. They form a large potential for numerical growth and internal revitalization.

Conventional wisdom used to be that, in order to grow, the Mennonite church needed to be more fundamentalistic and downplay Anabaptist theology and values. I agree with Roth that the opposite is true.—*John A. Bertsche, Normal, Ill.*

Mennonites and the Roman Catholic Church

The recent $600 million settlement in Los Angeles by the Roman Catholic Church is the third major scandal of its kind in the last couple of years. In all three, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church has refused to cooperate with law enforcement. They have shown little or no concern for the victims. Making matters worse, the Catholic Church has shown a preference for protecting the accused (molesters) by moving them to other parishes.

Given this, what is the purpose of Bridgefolk? Is it to eventually merge Mennonites into the Catholic Church? What is Mennonite USA's stand on this?—*Mark Larimer, New Haven, Ind.*

Response: *Bridgefolk is a grass-roots movement among Mennonites and Catholics who seek to become friends. We meet annually to pray, tell our stories and encourage each other through sharing gifts we believe can strengthen both traditions. Bridgefolk has not taken a position on how such sharing ought to bear fruit in church relationships. What brought us together was a desire to discern the meaning of the many ways we are already connecting in peace building, relief and development, and spiritual formation. We work with the encouragement of the Interchurch Relations Committee of Mennonite Church USA. Our mission statement and additional documentation is readily available at www.bridgefolk.net.*—Marlene Kropf, cochair of Bridgefolk board and member of Mennonite Church USA Interchurch Relations Committee

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Total votes: 90

○ Someone close to me has cancer (60%)

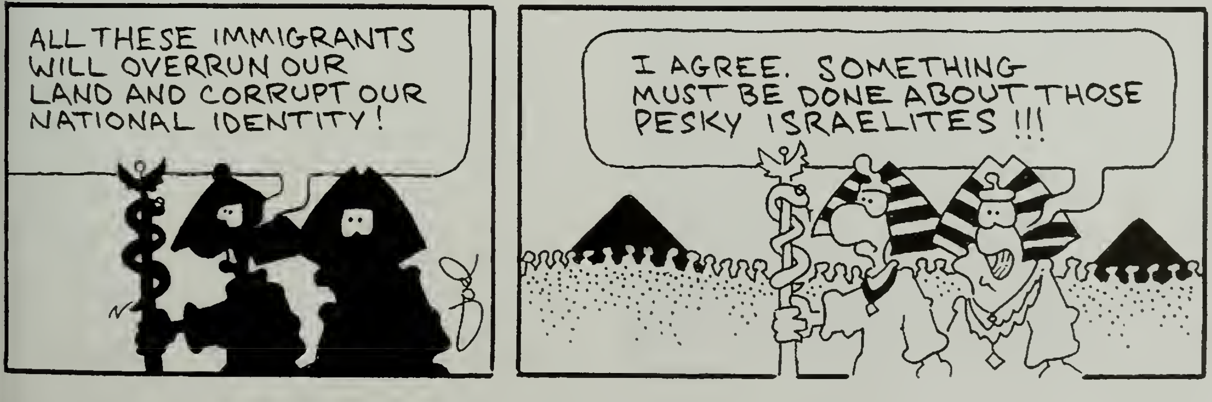
○ I have had cancer (8%)

○ Both (16%)

○ Neither (17%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


ALL THESE IMMIGRANTS WILL OVERRUN OUR LAND AND CORRUPT OUR NATIONAL IDENTITY!
I AGREE. SOMETHING MUST BE DONE ABOUT THOSE PESKY ISRAELITES!!!

IN BRIEF

Koehn on Harvard Divinity School Alumni/ae Council

Dennis R. Koehn, MDiv '78, is the newly elected president of the Harvard Divinity School Alumni/ae Council, which serves the greater Harvard Divinity School Association of more than 5,500 alumni. A member of Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., he has spent the past 20 years as a management consultant in private practice. He also served on the General Board of the General Conference Mennonite Church and as an interviewer for the Harvard College admissions department. He has served on the Harvard Divinity School Alumni/ae Council since 2003. *—Harvard Divinity School*

EMU annual gifts set new record

Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., received $5,111,510 in total contributions for the 2006-2007 fiscal year. Kirk L. Shisler, vice president for advancement, says that contributions of $1,764,000 to the University Fund set a new record, surpassing the 2006 annual fund total of $1,733,000 by nearly 2 percent.*—Eastern Mennonite University*

Miriam Martin, conference minister, dies at 64

Miriam Martin

EAST EARL, Pa.—Miriam Martin, vice chair for The Mennonite, Inc. board, and conference minister and administrator of Mennonite Church USA's Atlantic Coast Conference, died July 3 after a brief illness. She was 64.

"Miriam was a friend and mentor to many [people] across [Atlantic Coast Conference], churchwide and within her community," wrote Warren Tyson, conference ministry team leader, in a statement sent to churches.

Martin and her husband, Bob, "provided a home and friendship" for many people in times of need, according to Tyson.

Martin, a member of Ridgeview Mennonite Church in Gordonville, Pa., had worked in conference ministries for 16 years. In 2003, she became conference minister and in 2005 was named Atlantic Coast's missional church development coordinator.

She served on the team that helped carry out the merger that formed Mennonite Church USA. She also served on the General Board of the former Mennonite Church.

A 1966 graduate of Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., she served on the Mennonite Church USA Constituency Leaders Council and on the Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School board.

Martin is survived by her husband, Bob; a daughter, Sonia Straley of Ephrata, Pa.; two sons, Robert of Boyertown, Pa., and Jeffrey of Findlay, Ohio; a brother, Marvin Meyers of Willow Street, Pa.; a sister, Ethel Kolb of Myerstown, Pa.; and nine grandchildren.

A memorial service was held July 21 at Ridgeview Mennonite Church. Nelson Yoder, associate pastor at Ridgeview Mennonite, said approximately 350 people attended the service. Letters from church agencies, church leaders and people who worked with Martin were read during the service.*—Mennonite Weekly Review and Anna Groff*

Lowell Brown

Boulder Church gives back part of JoinHands gift

At the Mennonite Men (MM) booth at San José 2007 on July 5, Eldon Mast (left), chair of Boulder (Colo.) Mennonite Church (BMC), Jim Gingerich, MM coordinator, Lawrence Bartel, MM treasurer, and Karen Cox, pastor of BMC, help put a roof on a model of Rochester Area (N.Y.) Mennonite Fellowship, which will receive a grant in the next two years from JoinHands, MM's church building program. BMC received a JoinHands grant in 1986 for $50,000, which helped the church buy a building for $250,000. In 2004, BMC sold the building for $1.1 million and bought another for $1.2 million, plus $150,000 for remodeling. The church is in the process of raising $350,000, say Mast and Cox, but is giving 10 percent of what they raise to JoinHands to help other new congregations. "Our church wanted to follow the firstfruits guidelines," said Mast. The church, which has about 100 members, plans to give around $9,000 every six months over a three-year period. Cox, who became pastor in 2005, says BMC is "a vibrant, healthy congregation," and the new building gives them room for growth. People still grateful for the grant BMC received more than 20 years ago, she says.*—Gordon Houser*

Philhaven CEO announces resignation

MT. GRETNA, Pa.—LaVern Yutzy, chief executive officer of Philhaven, a behavioral health-care organization, announced his resignation from his position effective in June 2008.

During Yutzy's tenure as CEO, he has assembled a strong leadership team to help expand the organization in order to carry out its mission.

Under his guidance, Philhaven has grown to a full continuum of 65 behavioral health programs serving over 20,000 people annually in south central Pennsylvania, including many community-based and outpatient services.

In Yutzy's 16 years as Philhaven's CEO, the organization's budget has grown from $18 million to more than $50 million.

Hamilton said the board plans a search process that will consider both internal and external candidates.*—Philhaven*

Greensburg Mennonite celebration postponed

GREENSBURG, Kan.—Greensburg Mennonite Church has postponed its celebration to observe its 75th year of ministry.

Plans had been underway earlier to hold a commemorative observance on Sept. 2, inviting former members and attendees, former pastors and friends to mark this milestone date.

Plans for celebration changed dramatically on

Tammy Evans

M's Global Fair draws record crowd

oung girl models clothing of the Quechua people supplied Ron and Regina Shultz, missionaries to Peru, at Eastern nnonite Missions' Global Fair, held July 14 at Lancaster (Pa.) nnonite School. Record crowds of more than 1,200 people nded the fair.—*EMM*

May 4, when an EF-5 tornado leveled most of Greensburg, including the church's meeting place and parsonage.

Little was left of the physical properties. Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) and unaffected members of the congregation aided the clean-up effort.

MDS has set up a base camp on the church property to continue to assist with the effort. Volunteers will continue to be scheduled through MDS.—*Greensburg Mennonite Church*

Vietnamese conference meets in Virginia

FALLS CHURCH, Va.—Representatives of the Vietnamese Mennonite churches in North America (NAVMF) met June 29-July 1 at the eighth biennial conference in Falls Church, hosted by the local congregation, Vietnamese Christian Fellowship.

The conference of the NAVMF was chaired by Nhien Pham from Vancouver, who served as the NAVMF president for 10 years.

During his tenure, NAVMF supported church development in Vietnam and in 2006 established a Vietnamese congregation in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

The guest speaker was Thomas Stebbins, former Christian and Missionary Alliance missionary in Vietnam.

Rev. Chau Dang from Calgary, Alta., was chosen the new NAVMF president. The next conference is scheduled for Edmonton, Alta., in 2009.
—*Luke Martin*

CMU top in sustainable commuting

WINNIPEG—When it comes to sustainable commuting, Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) is number one in Canada among post-secondary institutions.

The university attained that distinction during the June 3-9 Go for Green national Commuter Challenge, a program that aims to increase the awareness of the benefits of sustainable commuting and to encourage Canadians to walk, cycle, take transit, carpool or telework instead of driving alone to get to work.

Altogether, 34 percent of CMU's employees participated in the Challenge.

The city of Winnipeg came in first place among cities from 500,000 to 999,000 in population during the Challenge.—*CMU*

Eight CPT trainees arrested during mock trial

CHICAGO—On July 23, members of CPT's summer training group and supporters held a mock trial, indicting Sen. Dick Durbin's (D-Ill.) Iraq war voting record.

With "History" as the judge, participants called the "Court of Public Opinion" to order at the Federal Building in downtown Chicago. Inside both the Senator's 38th floor office and the Federal Building lobby, witnesses offered testimony regarding the Senator's votes for "life" and "war."

After 40 minutes, Chicago police arrived on the scene and arrested eight CPT trainees carrying out their witness inside the building. They charged the eight with criminal trespass (a misdemeanor) and took them to jail. All were released by 3:30 a.m. and will appear in court on Aug. 13.
—*CPT*

Miller named editor of *OurFaith*

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Joe Miller of Honey Brook, Pa., has been appointed editor of *OurFaith* digest, a widely distributed grassroots Mennonite quarterly in the United States.

He succeeds Eugene Souder, founding editor.

OurFaith is an every-home digest sent to almost all Mennonite Church USA congregations.

Currently Miller is a part-time chaplain intern at Tel Hai, a Mennonite retirement community, a free-lance writer for *Tri County Record* of Morgantown, Pa., and is completing his master's degree in religion at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.—*OurFaith*

—*compiled by Anna Groff*

IN BRIEF

Bare steps in as interim director for Europe

Lois Bare began serving as interim director for Europe on June 5, while Mennonite Mission Network searches for a long-term candidate.

Bare served a three-year term as hostess and administrator at the London Mennonite Centre, which she completed in February. Through staff retreats and personnel visits to LMC, she developed relationships with many of Mission Network's Europe team.

Previously Bare spent five years at the Connecticut Fund for the Environment in a development position. Bare and her husband, Jim, now live in Goshen, Ind.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Feels so good

A team of economists and psychologists at the University of Oregon have discovered that giving money to charity activates parts of the brain that have to do with the experience of pleasure. The researchers see this as evidence that there is such a thing as pure altruism—people will take actions that help others when to do so is not in their best interests.—*The Christian Century*

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Faith for

by Esther M. Bailey

After I told her about my mastectomy, a friend said to me, "I don't know how you can be so casual about this." Actually, all my confidants took my situation more seriously than I did.

A combination of factors prepared me to face the diagnosis of breast cancer with a minimum of trauma. I had read a powerful book on healing that programmed my mind with positive thinking. Perhaps God had me in mind when my pastor said, "Faith that is untested isn't faith at all." Maybe I'm overdue for a test, I thought. After all, my carefree existence couldn't last forever.

My courage could have come only from God. On my own, I'm pretty much of a coward, fearing the unknown. I'll take the tried and true course of action over adventure any time. Natural characteristics, endowed by my Creator, did not include bravery.

Before surgery, I asked my pastor and his wife to anoint me with oil and pray that God take charge of everything that happened in the operating room.

When I first discovered the thickening in my breast, neither the mammogram nor the ultrasound revealed a definite diagnosis. My doctor ordered a biopsy, but I had already planned to attend a conference and did not want to cancel. Before my doctor agreed to postpone the biopsy, she said, "I don't think this will turn out to be nothing."

The stimulating conference kept my mind occupied. I didn't have time to think about the possibility of cancer. After going to bed one night, though, I felt the need to touch the hem of Christ's garment. I placed a Kleenex over my breast as a symbol of my faith and slept soundly.

Of the 10 samples taken during the biopsy, seven of them turned out to be positive for cancer. Before surgery, I asked my pastor and his wife to anoint me with oil and pray that God take charge of everything that happened in the operating room. Following biblical instruction in James 5:14 strengthened my faith. Another pastor and two minister friends waited with my husband during the surgery. A sense of divine protection encompassed me.

Thursday morning, following my Wednesday surgery, I returned home, able to assume a nearly normal routine. I attended church Sunday morning, full of praise to God.

Counting my blessings helped me retain an inner joy throughout my treatment program. When I compared my situation to the prob-

living or dying

Facing cancer treatment with Scripture, song and prayer

lems of two of my friends, I considered myself fortunate to face a comparatively easy challenge. A woman three years younger than I was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Over a period of months another woman had several eye surgeries that left her with significant impairment of vision. Either of those afflictions would have challenged me far more than cancer, but faith also helped my friends handle their ordeals in a gracious manner.

Wanting to keep a low profile, I shared my situation with only close friends who would support me with encouragement and prayer. I expected the surgery to cure the problem and I could sever my connection with cancer forever.

The cancer turned out to be advanced with lymph-node involvement. I would need chemotherapy, radiation and continued oral therapy—the whole package. This news unsettled me a bit, but I bounced back quickly. The same God who amazed the nurses with my swift recovery from surgery would take me through the rest of the program.

My oncologist's report of possible side effects of chemotherapy caused another sobering moment. Maybe my ordeal wasn't going to be as easy as I had thought. I tried to dismiss frightening words such as leukemia and death. These were rare exceptions, not to be expected. Focusing on faith, I purchased a wig to prepare for the inevitable loss of hair.

In less dramatic fashion, though, I continued to dwell on the good and bad effects of chemotherapy. How could I separate the two? As I pondered the question, a Scripture verse came to my mind. Personalizing Jeremiah 29:11 (KJV) created a pact between God and me. "I know the thoughts that I think toward [Esther Bailey], saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give [her] an expected end."

What a concept! God could direct my body to use the good part of the chemicals and discard the bad. I got more excited every time I repeated the verse, which was often. During infusions, I pictured God performing a chemical miracle.

The personal message I received from Scripture aroused music in my soul. I arranged the words in lyrical style: " 'My plans for you are not for harm,' / Says the Lord, Almighty God. / 'My plans for you are for your good / To give you hope eternally.' " With a bit of adaptation, I sang the words to the tune of "Emmanuel" (1976 C.A. Music, W/M Bob McGee).

Through eight sessions of chemotherapy, my heart continued to sing the promise of Scripture. I didn't even experience the common unpleasant side effects. "You make this seem so easy," a nurse once said to me.

The oncologist said, "You have gone through this graciously." I was glad to tell him that prayer and faith made the difference.

All through radiation, I continued to claim Jeremiah 29:11. I pictured myself receiving the greatest value and the least damage from the treatment. Tamoxifen, the drug that reduces the risk of recurring cancer by 50 percent, also has possible adverse side effects. For five years, though, the benefits outweigh the risks; so Jeremiah 29:11 will be my long-term companion. I believe any medical risks can be reduced by relying on God's promise.

Not only was my own faith strengthened, others began to realize the value of a relationship with God.

Good things have happened to me as a direct result of cancer. Not only was my own faith strengthened, others began to realize the value of a relationship with God. Attitudes changed from tolerating me as a "religious freak" to seeking information about the Christian lifestyle. My testimony helped others deal with cancer. As my influence for good increased, I began to understand James 1:2 (KJV): "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."

I don't take a smug attitude about what faith did for me. In fact, I marvel at my experience with true humility. Faith does not guarantee that I will be cancer-free for the rest of my life. People with far more faith than I lose their lives to cancer, but faith still makes a difference. The God they trust goes with them through the valley of death and ushers them into a better place.

Whatever challenge confronts me in the future, I can handle it with faith. For a while yet, I hope to exercise faith for living, but when the time comes, faith will take the sting out of death. Faith is good for living and faith is good for dying.

Esther M. Bailey lives in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Homeward

A 20-year-old chooses not to have life support.

by Steve Steiner

Tuesday I was on an early morning flight from Cleveland to Wichita, Kan. The night before, we had received a call that our 20-year-old son Paul was in the hospital with serious health problems due to lupus. Paul's kidneys were so weak and diseased that he would need to leave college. I was afraid. How could I help him walk through this struggle of shattered dreams? Paul had experienced so much pain in his childhood years as an orphan in Guatemala—and now this. I cried.

"Hi, Dad," he said as I walked into his room. "It's good to see you." We talked a bit about the family before he said, "Dad, I have some business with you. When it's time for me to die, promise me you won't keep me hooked to machines. Let me go be with Jesus. Dad, promise me."

"I'll do my best," I said.

Paul went on: "I want to tell my birth father in Guatemala that I forgive him for killing my birth mom and that I love him. I want to tell him about the joy and peace I have in Jesus Christ."

I want to tell my birth father in Guatemala that I forgive him for killing my birth mom and that I love him.
—Paul

I was amazed. "Paul, you've changed. What happened?"

"Last Thursday night, Jesus came to me in a dream. He was right here in my room with outstretched hands, asking me to come home. Dad, you would not believe how beautiful heaven is."

"What did you tell Jesus?" I asked.

"That I could not go yet."

"Why was that, Son?"

"Dad, I need to tell my birth father I forgive him for all the things he did."

"Paul, we'll do everything we can to find your birth father," I promised.

Midafternoon, three of his friends stopped in to visit. While we talked, Paul fell asleep. In his sleep he talked inaudibly, weeping as he spoke. The four of us, not sure what was happening, softly sang familiar hymns. When Paul woke up, I asked, "Son, what were you dreaming?"

"Jesus came to me again and asked if I was ready to come home."

"What did you tell Jesus, Paul?"

"I'm ready."

The next morning, when I returned to his room, I found that Paul had a fever and was uncomfortable. As his temperature rose, his blood pressure dropped. I read Scripture and prayed with him. Late in the night, Paul said, "Dad, if I can't urinate, does that mean my kidneys quit working?" When I said it probably did, he said, "Remember, Dad, I don't want to be kept alive with a machine."

On Thursday morning I called my wife, Beverly, to tell her Paul had a rough night. She supported Paul's request not to allow life support. We prayed for wisdom for the decisions to be made.

Paul was sitting up in bed when I returned, panicked and in pain, "Where were you, Dad? I'm sorry. I tried to move and I pulled out my IV."

Since the IV team was unable to restart Paul's IV, Paul was transferred to the Intensive Care Unit. The doctor said things were not good. "Something grave is wrong in his abdomen. We'd like to do exploratory surgery. It will mean a ventilator and, if we can get his blood pressure up, a dialysis machine. The kidneys have shut down. We don't know what's going on." The doctor told me the chances of Paul's surviving the surgery were 50-50 at best, and there was a possibility Paul would need a dialysis machine for the rest of his life.

At that moment I remembered the words Eric, Paul's younger brother, had spoken to me only 30 minutes earlier. When Eric phoned, he said, "Dad, we don't want machines to keep Paul alive. Paul's body is not like most 20-year-olds; it's much older than that." This gave me an overwhelming sense that the right decisions were being made.

I explained Paul's requests to the doctor and his refusal of life support. Since I respected those desires, I could not sign for the operation. I had peace I was telling the doctor the right thing.

I sensed tenderness in the doctor as he said he respected my position. He advised me that Paul probably had less than an hour to live. I left to go and stay with our son.

Paul was clearly glad to see me. "Dad, I would like to have an anointing service when my friends come."

I thought, he has less than an hour to live; his friends have exams this morning, and they'll never

bound

Provided

make it. "Paul," I said, "let's you and I have the service, and then when your friends come we'll have another one."

I held Paul in my arms, his frail, weakened body slowly shutting down. Paul said he was at peace with God. I thanked the Lord for Paul's life and asked God to pour out his grace on Paul. I thanked the Lord for the great emotional and spiritual healing he had done in Paul's life. Even though I did not understand why Paul had to experience so much pain, I thanked God for giving Paul the grace to endure it. Paul then prayed a short prayer of thanksgiving for the life and opportunities he had experienced. Then, since there was no oil available, I took my saliva and anointed Paul's head.

Shortly the chaplain came, and we talked in the hall while the nurses attended to Paul. "The doctors have something they want me to ask you," the chaplain said. "They do not understand you and your son. They are confused. Why no heroic efforts, no machines?"

"Christians are just passing through this life on their way to a better place," I said.

"You don't understand." The chaplain tried to explain. "Daily, they deal with distraught families. Even when treating a 90-year-old patient on the verge of death, they are expected to do all they can to keep the person alive for a few more days or weeks. Many of these are Christian families, too. Your son is young, 20, in the prime of his life. Why, as a father, would you not do everything possible to keep him alive?"

I told him of Paul's experience of peace and looking forward to heaven. I shared my understanding that we place too much value on our earthly lives, that Scripture tells us life is a prelude to heaven. I explained that Paul knew he was going to have a new, perfect body. Why should I wish to hold him here? Instead I had released him to God's care and keeping. I knew God could do a miracle and restore Paul's body, but Paul had already received the ultimate healing of emotion and spirit. To me that was what mattered.

Shortly after this, friends from college walked into his room. I was surprised. Didn't they have exams? How did they know to come? Then the dean of students walked over to Paul's bed and said, "I am here to see you."

Weakly Paul said, "I know, and it will probably be the last time."

"Paul, would it be OK if we had an anointing service?" the dean said.

What I had thought could not happen did. Paul's friends gathered around him for the anointing service he desired. The dean prayed and anointed Paul with oil as we quietly sang several hymns. All of us in that holy moment experienced God's comfort and peace.

Why,
as a father,
would you
not do
everything
possible
to keep him
alive?

Paul's blood pressure improved, and he sat in a chair. The nurse agreed to bend the rules for visitors, but only two people at a time. Paul was happy to be up. It hurt a great deal, but he stayed there for three or four hours. For the next eight hours a stream of Paul's classmates, the soccer coach and fellow teammates came by. Two by two they came into his room, and he challenged each in their faith walk. They had come to grieve with Paul in this difficult time but went away blessed, privileged to be at his bedside as he encouraged them on their journey of life.

In the middle of the afternoon the surgeon who had diagnosed Paul's illness as lupus just two weeks earlier stopped by. I asked if Paul's kidneys could ever recover. He explained that they were too diseased to ever work again. Some of the agony over the decisions we had made earlier eased.

That evening, as I sat with Paul, he said, "Dad, I am so happy I'm going home." His radiance was intense as he lay there in peace. As Paul slipped away, he left a testimony of a glorious homecoming with Jesus.

Paul was gone from this life, but my work was not over. I was committed to finding his birth father and sharing Paul's story. My flight home, despite the pain of missing Paul, was a celebration of the freedom my son was experiencing in his heavenly home.

Steve Steiner is a member of Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Fotolia.com

The abuse in illness

by Faye Nyce

A diagnosis of terminal illness is a severe blow to anyone and his or her family. Life had been going on at a normal pace—working, raising children, volunteering—when, without noticeable warning, one of us was hit with a "ton of bricks." Life was suddenly confusingly unreal for all of us. It hit us in the solar plexus.

When friends, family, acquaintances, as well as people one barely knows, learn of the illness, everyone wants to help. That is appreciated. However, one of the tragedies of being sick with a difficult disease is the large amount of books, opinions and potions that are touted by others who feel they know "just the right thing." Everyone wants to "make it all better." Some people have the right touch and know how to do this, but others, though just as well-meaning, can actually make things worse for the patient. At one point, the ill patient's friend gave her a book. The patient asked me to read the book and give her my opinion. She did not have the time or energy to read through this type of book.

Stockxpert.com

Do not tell the patient that this illness will bring him or her closer to the Lord.

Here are some "don'ts" in our situation:

1. Don't try to tell the patient and/or his or her family anything about someone else who had the same disease and died. This is the patient's own journey and she or he needs to be given comforting, sensitive words. It is difficult for me to believe that someone can see him/herself as well meaning when they give a detailed list to the patient or family member of all the organs where this disease can/will spread and how horrible it will all be before "it is over."

2. Squash your need to give the patient advice on who to see, where to go for help and what medications/herbal remedies to take. The patient has his/her own team of doctors who are doing what is best in this particular circumstance. Don't even bother to tell them what you read on the Internet about a similar situation.

3. Do not tell the patient that this illness will bring him or her closer to the Lord. It takes a lot of restraint for the patient not to then wish the illness on the bearer of this message so that this person can also be closer to the Lord. This is another case where the patient has to be the polite one—instead of the other way around.

4. Some patients cannot handle a phone call that concludes with prayer over the phone. It is tiring for the patient to have to have a phone conversation and then need to hang on for a long, pious prayer. Again, the patient feels he or she has to be gracious and listen through this prayer, which may even come from a different theological bent than the patient experiences. It is important for the patient to know that people are praying for her or him and he or she is thankful for those prayers, but do it on your own time—not over the phone with the patient.

5. Often it is not wise to visit. Even though we may know this to be true, many of us feel that surely "I" am a close enough friend that it is OK for "me" to visit. Visits can be very tiring, and even when people say it will be a short visit, it often becomes too long. Try to restrain yourself in the visits and phone calls. Sending kind, sensitive notes is much better. The patient can read these while resting and can save them to read over and over when he or she needs the boost your note can bring. Especially do not bring little children—even the best of children are often too noisy and too much into things and can cause anxiety. Please do not make it necessary for the patient to have to clean things up after you leave, thinking you have done your good deed by visiting. If you do visit, a 20-minute visit is more than enough. If you are from a distance, two hours is tops. Remember you are abusing the patient's energy reserve by staying too long.

6. Those of us who have been patients would like others to be aware that we are still equal, functioning human beings, even after our lives have turned topsy-turvy. Please remember that the patient is every bit as equal as those walking around. If the person is sitting in a treatment chair, has an IV hooked up, is in a hospital gown, has lost her or his hair, or whatever the case may be, try to think before you speak. Don't necessarily speak for them if they can speak for themselves or talk in third person about the patient or treat them in any way that they are somehow made to feel less of a person. Don't have a little meeting with others who came to visit when the patient is sitting or lying right there perfectly able to hear or sense what is going on. Remember that this patient is a whole person, no matter what has happened. But for the grace of God, it could be you sitting there in the same predicament, and you would want to be treated with kindness and equality.

One of the most devastating things to do is to approach a person who is ill with an agenda of "why not you?"—that "in other, less-developed countries, people are being healed miraculously by the Lord, and why doesn't it happen in this country?" It can make the ill person feel blamed for not being spiritual enough, having enough faith or somehow standing in the way of healing. Keep in mind that asking personal questions such as, Have you been anointed? is another example of interference and thus abuse.

The ill person already has enough pain and sorrow without being told of other people's journeys. Why does the ill person have to be unloaded upon by another person's expectations. And above all, don't tell the ill person about someone who died, but it all turned out well because the surviving spouse soon found someone else "good" and got married again. This is the height of abuse.

Some dos: Besides kind, sensitive notes sent to the patient, another kind gesture is sending a bouquet. Prepared meals are a boon for the patient and the entire family. Just be sure you are fixing foods allowed in the patient's diet. And if the patient wishes, cleaning the house can be helpful. However, keep yourself apprised of any rooms the patient doesn't want you to clean. Again, the patient should have that right to privacy. Helping with yard work can be a real blessing. If there are children in the family, it can be helpful to take them for the day once in a while and/or include them in special activities. Continuing to be there over the long haul with patients and their families is a priceless gift.

Those of us who have been patients would like others to be aware that we are still equal, functioning human beings, even after our lives have turned topsy-turvy.

All people need to feel loved but especially so when illness is so draining. We are here to help each other, and these are just some of the ways that feel right.

Faye Nyce is a member of Landisville Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Why we should thank God regularl

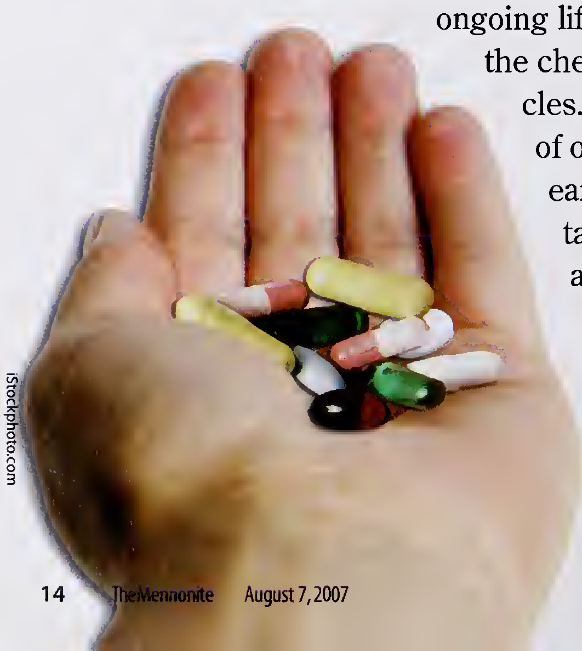
A couple of men in a popular eatery are astonished when caught by surprise by an aged, working-class woman and small child who discretely yet publicly bow their heads to say grace. It's all alive in painter Norman Rockwell's unforgettable "Saying Grace" on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* of Nov. 24, 1951. The scene accents how countercultural such a practice was in this country a half-century ago.

But where I live in Indiana, the practice seems to be more and more visible in public places in Elkhart County where my wife and I have eaten out. I once saw a tattooed, ear-ringed and leather-clad motorcyclist silently and discretely bow his head in a restaurant after he was served. In fact, at least one restaurant in the area suggests giving thanks and even proposes words of gratitude for people who don't know what to say.

At least three times a day we "say grace" and remind ourselves of the interconnection among that vital triad of our existence—creatures, Creator, Creation.

"Thanks, Lord, for the food," one may say or simply breathe. Or one may do so with other words, with songs or other expressions that replace the simple "thanks" or "food" or "Lord." After all, we don't want to feel we are just doing "vain repetitions," which our Lord disdains.

For most of us, this is a habit—and a good one—we inherited from our families and our churches. But it was somehow a meaningless tradition for the U.S. Mennonite friend in Europe years ago who asked with a grin, when everyone had taken their places around the table, "Well, shall we all look at our feet?" Much more meaningfully, for most of us, before the meal there are at least bowed heads and a moment of silence. We wish to give some genuine recognition that an Other is the source of our fantastic, ongoing life—with all that stuff going on in the cells, the blood, the brain, the chest and the tummy, not to mention the skeleton and the muscles. We acknowledge that we are creatures, grateful to the mystery of our Creator and a special creation, with the various fruits of the earth that nourish us and give our life continuity. We do not just take these for granted. At least three times a day we "say grace" and remind ourselves of the interconnection among that vital triad of our existence—creatures, Creator, Creation.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... and th

by David A. Shank

or all that nourishes us

In the Marxist Athénée in Belgium, where I taught Protestant religion in the 1960s, my Catholic counterpart always ritually crossed himself before taking any food at mealtime. The mostly unbelieving observers must have thought to themselves, Hmm, the pastor bows his head, and the priest crosses himself. These Christians seem to have this thing about food and their God. Whatever it finally meant to them, I'm sure that at the beginning the scene must have looked like the Norman Rockwell painting. It's probably why I feel an emotional attachment to it. But where does this "saying grace" come from, beyond the tradition from family and the church community?

The best suggestion is that our Lord himself did so. The Gospels report that when Jesus fed the 4,000 plus the women and children, "he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks he broke them and gave them." Also for the 5,000: "Looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves." Later, when he ate with his disciples at the Last Supper, before giving them the bread and the wine, the Gospels note that "he gave thanks." Yet after the resurrection, when he had a fish breakfast with the disciples along the shore, the text says simply that "Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish." Did the Lord himself skip one, or does "took the bread" imply that, as was his usage, he first gave thanks?

Whatever may be the case, it is notable elsewhere that when the Apostle Paul was in the storm-tossed ship with 276 on board and without food for many days, he finally urged people to eat. Then "he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat." Does "in front of them all" suggest that for his companion Luke, this was a conscious moment of witness? Elsewhere, Paul wrote of those who eat meat and of those who do not eat meat that they both "give thanks to the Lord," as if, indeed, when a Christian eats, giving thanks to God is a normal part of it all. Elsewhere, when some Christians were being wrongly taught that they needed to abstain from certain foods, the same apostle insisted that these were created by God "to be received with thanksgiving" and that "nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving" because "it is consecrated by the Word of God and prayer."

So there is a longtime usage, long before family and church, going back to our Lord—and no doubt to Israel before him—that is confirmed by the apostles. Christians, by definition, are grateful for their sustenance. So they find it appropriate—sometimes as a witness—to give thanks for the earthly nourishment that sustains life and their lives of service in the kingdom of God.

Just think how the various, particular kinds of food meet the particular needs of particular parts of the body at particular times with their particular conditions. There are the carbohydrates, proteins, fats, starches, acids, solids, liquids, antioxidants, dairy products, fruits, grains and meats. We are grateful we can actually take certain foods and prepare them in such a way as to direct them at certain needs or conditions for sustaining or enhancing life. Just think of all the farmers, harvesters, canning companies, middlemen, shippers, grocers and others in the food chain that have all made this possible by putting all this at our disposal. As creatures we are grateful to them. But behind them all is the creation and the Creator, and so we give thanks to the Lord.

We are grateful we can actually take certain foods and prepare them in such a way as to direct them at certain needs or conditions for sustaining or enhancing life.

But have you ever thought about the fact that most of us probably don't give thanks when we take our pills? Why don't we say grace for them? What about those medicines the doctors prescribe? Are they not to be understood also as a form of nourishment—like food? It's true they often have an awful taste. And it's true they are often hard to swallow. Sometimes all the daily

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medicines

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prescribed doses are seemingly impossible to manage or organize. And their costs are out of this world. Giving thanks or saying grace before taking medicines? Whoever heard of that? Nevertheless, these, too, are fruits of the earth and nourishment from the Creator's good creation. Like our food, they are carefully aimed at particular situations in order to produce particular results for healthy well-being. So when one takes the medicines prescribed by the doctor, why not breathe or say a prayer of thanks?

Medicines and pills are indeed concentrated doses of particularly and carefully chosen resources from the good earth that are ingeniously processed to meet specific needs. They are conceived especially to be used for a vital concern: the heart, kidney, irregularity, shoulder pain, headache, hard hearing, arthritis, indigestion or whatever. I take 18 pills every day. First of all, I have a nitroglycerin patch cooperating with my Pacemaker. Then I take six pills with breakfast, three with dinner, five with supper and three before going to bed. These are in addition to the 12 liters of dextrose my dialysis machine processes for me every night already for five years. All this has been carefully studied, processed and prepared for personal consumption and aimed at my particular needs by my physicians. I am grateful to them all, and I give thanks to the Lord for the medicines.

Now you must think I'm sick. Absolutely not. That's the point. I am alive and reasonably healthy for my years because of all those prescriptions for pills and medicines, just like food. They cost a lot (and someone is making a lot of profit), but researchers, biochemists, analysts, inventors, biologists, physicians, pharmacists and others have spent many hours—and sometimes years—and a lot of capital to make all this special nourishment possible, just like food. Indeed, all this nourishes like food, with each kind fulfilling its particular role in sustaining life.

Along with Israel, our Lord, the apostles, Christians of the past and my own family and church, from whom I received it, I have decided to be grateful for all that nurtures life and say it over and over again. "Thank you, Lord, for your blessings of food, and the medicines, fruits of the earth that nourish us, keep us alive and enable us to serve you while we live. Amen. P.S. This is not a vain repetition."

Whenever any of us responds with thankfulness for life to the Lord of life, whether spontaneously or ritually, in private or in public, silently or aloud, it is appropriate to think food and not forget the medicines.

David A. Shank is a member of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

I have decided to be grateful for all that nurtures life and say it over and over again.

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I didn't really plan to talk during my first encounter, but by the end I had spilled my guts, tears and all.

Addictions

Filling the spaces where God belongs

by Christian Piatt

More than a year ago, I had the unenviable task of telling a close friend of mine that if he did not stop drinking he would die. I agonized over the decision for months, worried it would end our relationship or that it would send him on a bender that would fulfill my prediction sooner than expected.

What happened was both encouraging and distressing.

A couple of weeks later, I got an email from him, thanking me for my concern and love for him. While not acknowledging the fatal course of his addiction, he did recognize the excessiveness of his behavior. The fact that he would still speak with me after I confronted him gave me hope, but he also indicated in his letter that he didn't have intentions of stopping.

I've had other, more personal experiences with addiction in my extended family, as have most people I know. Without exception, the addictive behavior in question brings pain with it, both for the one living with the addiction and for those who love them.

Sometimes the pain comes from watching the deterioration of someone you love in the grip of something they cannot control. It also comes from when the addiction drives a wedge between all involved.

There are two things you can almost always count on when someone is an addict: It will generally get worse before it gets better, and everyone involved suffers.

My first reaction to loved ones struggling with addiction is anger. I'm not an angry person by nature, but the helplessness we feel when grappling with addiction—ours or someone else's—seems to drain us of power. It even can steal our hope.

Without hope, we sink into despair, left with an emptiness where God should be. Instead of opening ourselves to grace we feel we don't deserve, we numb out the self-criticizing voices, the contemptible impulses and the pain that comes in their wake. The pain may subside momentarily, but then the guilt follows, which leads to more numbing.

Writer Frederick Buechner talks about despair in his book *Wishful Thinking*. He says, "Despair has been called the unforgivable sin—not presumably because God refuses to forgive it but because it despairs of the possibility of being forgiven."

We've all been in a situation where we're so embarrassed or ashamed about something we've done that we don't want to ask to be forgiven. Perhaps we'll feel weak or vulnerable in admitting our screwups. Maybe we just don't think we deserve the forgiveness that might follow. So despair sets in instead.

Thinking about addiction in this way, I'm taking baby steps toward getting over my anger. It does me no good anyway, only offering a false sense of power. After some months of encouragement, I finally agreed last week to attend a support group for people who are struggling with the effects of a loved one's addiction. I didn't really plan to talk during my first encounter, but by the end I had spilled my guts, tears and all.

Watching someone we love slowly sink into a self-destructive pattern from which they may or may not ever emerge is enough to put us off loving all together. We can always choose to walk away, or we can stick around and love anyway, in spite of the risks. What we can't do is wait around, expecting the person we love to change.

All we have is love for the sake of itself and the opportunity to move on with our lives. Whether the person mired in addiction chooses to seek the help they need to join us in hope is completely up to them. It's a fact with which I'm still coming to terms, but the alternative of binding myself to another person's despair is too much, even for the people I love the most.

Christian Piatt lives in Pueblo, Colo.

Principled liberalism

Dennis R. Koehn is a member of Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

I have been a liberal all my life. I grew up in the Bethel College Mennonite Church in North Newton, Kan., and assumed all Mennonites were liberal.

About 10 years ago my former pastor, John Esau, shared a story. Leroy Friesen, a teacher at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., had given a series of lectures at Bethel College. Upon returning to Elkhart, he apparently described Bethel College as the only community in North America that was "self-consciously proud of its liberalism."

I was shaped by this liberal Mennonite theology. As a child I observed people's actions, their lived theology: Women were competent and had meaningful leadership roles in the church and its institutions. My mother, Louise Duerksen Koehn, was the first woman deacon in our church. Mennonites had strong opinions on public policy and sought to influence the government. My friend Jim Juhnke ran for the U.S. Congress around 1970. Mennonites sought to create a better life for others in this world. Many people left my community to work with Mennonite Central Committee oversees in fields such as education, health care and agricultural development. Most people in my world lived healthy lives, with modest amounts of anxiety and guilt. Church was a setting for learning, joy, worship and fellowship. Many people in my congregation rallied to my support when I refused to register for the draft during the Vietnam War.

Theology also was articulated in my congregation: God is caring, present and generous. Jesus is a wise teacher, fervent prophet and one to be followed in this world. The church is a place to care for people and a launching pad for mission in the world. The world is a good place with a few areas of brokenness that need to be mended. Other races and cultures are part of God's family. Individual conscience is reliable and can be trusted. Service and peacemaking are major parts of the mission of the church.

Principles: As a principled liberal, I have roots in foundational principles: interdependence, justice, respect, compassion, service, nonviolent peace building and community. Promoting these values is more important than converting people of other faiths to Christianity. Commitment to growth and change. Other principles include respect for diversity and pluralism, zest for working with complexity, respect for the resources of the biblical tradition but not limited to it, interest in the humanity of Jesus and understanding his teaching and ethics, an awareness of the contribution of the human imagination to all theology, awareness that the church is a human institution with strengths and weaknesses.

All sectors of the theological spectrum have identifiable strengths. Here are a few that are good matches for liberals:

Family: raising children for global identity and involvement, creating marriages based on equality and mutuality, embracing nontraditional families.

Vocation: working in complex economic, social and political settings; working in professional roles in urban and multinational settings; interdisciplinary roles such as pastoral counseling, church mediation and community development.

Leadership: leading and staffing liberal arts colleges, leading large and complex institutions (including large and diverse congregations), facilitating consensus building among diverse groups, creating leadership opportunities for women, involvement in interfaith dialogue and projects, designing initiatives for peace and justice, guiding the spiritual growth of Christians who feel confined by orthodox beliefs and practices.

Analysis and synthesis: work that requires systems thinking: family, economic, communications, transportation, political, social and ecological systems; integrating the truth claims of religion and science.

While many liberals feel marginalized within Mennonite congregations and institutions, we make valuable contributions as long as we are respected. If the national mood is more influenced by fear and anxiety and if more Americans look to tradition for anchors, more pressure may be exerted to marginalize and "shun" liberals. However, if more Americans come to see the complexity of current ethical, economic, political and ecological challenges, the analysis and involvement of liberals may become more highly valued. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Church or family first?**—Harvey Yoder
- **A Mennonite convert**—Debra Sapp-Yarwood

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MennoMeet.com launches for singles

The online dating network for Mennonites has 90 (and growing) members.

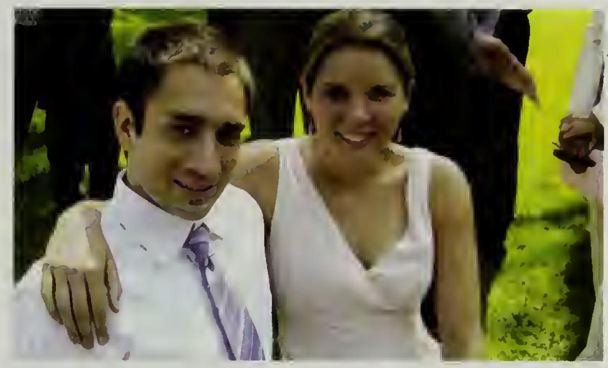

Photo provided

MennoMeet creators Jessica Yoder and Brad Miller.

MennoMeet.com greets visitors with: "No longer will we solely meet at youth conventions, Mennonite colleges or our second cousins' weddings. We've created a space where we can all interact. Kind of like one big cyber Mennonite youth convention without the curfew."

And that's what this site, an online dating network for Mennonites, has done for its 90 (and growing) members.

MennoMeet creators Jessica Yoder and Brad Miller, who live in Denver, attended different colleges; Brad graduated from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and Jessica from Goshen (Ind.) College. They married in May, after being introduced by Yoder's father, who was running partners with Miller in Harrisonburg.

Since they went to different schools, they had many Mennonite friends who did not know each other.

"As we started describing our friends to each other, we got the sense that maybe our single friends would be good matches for each other," Miller says. "Both of us have listened to our friends talk about how hard it is to meet someone outside the Mennonite church that understands their core values."

They also had friends using online dating services, like Match.com, as they were not meeting a lot of other single people in their day-to-day lives.

However, Yoder says, their friends felt frustrated by the people on those Web sites and, "even if there was a decent degree of compatibility, they still felt different because of their Mennonite ethnicity and values of pacifism, social justice and simple living."

She felt there was a real niche for the site, as many of her friends live where meeting other Mennonites is difficult.

Last month, they invited their single friends to join and told them to pass on the word. "It has spread fast," Yoder says. They receive about five new requests each day.

On MennoMeet, members create profiles complete with features to upload photos and blogs. They can send public and private messages to one another after browsing each other's profiles. On the profile they answer questions (see sidebar) as seriously or jokingly as they like.

Yoder says the feedback has been positive. "Middle-aged women have emailed me asking how they can get their young adult children on the site," she says. "Young people have commented that this is just what they were looking for. Married and dating people want to pass on the word. Many people can relate to being a single Mennonite looking for someone who shares their basic values."

Miller says the site can "play the Mennonite game" in a way that no other dating service can.

"As much as I can't stand that game for its exclusion of non-Mennonites, the Mennonite game works well in the dating world because it serves as a personal reference," he says. "If you want to learn more about someone you can ask their cousin, who just happens to be your next-door neighbor."

Miller and Yoder both have big dreams for the site, but they also have day jobs. Yoder is a family practice resident, and Miller is a graduate student in higher education administration at Denver University. They are open to suggestions from the MennoMeet members to direct the site's vision.

When they launched the site, their target age range for members was 25 to 35, but soon enough, people below and above that range started to join. "This is a perfect example of the market leading the way," Miller says.

They also wanted to create a sense of privacy for members. "We did not want people snooping around on the site to see who was on it," Miller says. To become a member, one must request an invitation at www.mennomeet.com.

Who can join? First, users must be single. Second, Miller and Yoder strongly discourage people under 21 from joining and do not permit anyone under age 18.

"So far, thanks to word-of-mouth, the members are primarily Mennonite or somehow related to a Mennonite church," Miller says. For example, some members grew up Mennonite but now attend a nondenominational church.

They would like to open up the site to Anabaptist-related denominations. "This site is not about dating a Mennonite as much as it is about finding someone with a similar faith, worldview and, more importantly, similar future plans for living … the way they believe Christ intended," Miller says.—*Anna Groff*

MennoMeet profile questions :

- What are you looking for in a potential partner?
- What is the farthest you'd be willing to travel for a relationship?
- How active are you in the Mennonite church?
- What is your favorite aspect of the Mennonite faith?
- What are three food items that best represent Mennonites for you?
- What do you see yourself doing in 10 years?

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

Students support 'crop for world hunger'

Fifth- and sixth-grade class lead church in Foods Resource Bank project.

Jacob Loewen

Farmer Tom Gunden (left) with Jesse Loewen (right) helped raise money for the Food Resource Bank project. Loewen's cousin, Christopher Payne (center), accompanied Gunden as he planted the field.

The fifth- and sixth-grade Sunday school class at College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., didn't opt for small goals this summer. They're taking on world hunger.

The class, encouraged by pastor Rosemary Widmer and in partnership with farmer and church member Tom Gunden, is leading the church in a Foods Resource Bank (FRB) project.

Through FRB, crops are raised and sold in the United States, and the proceeds fund agricultural projects, including Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) projects, in other countries.

Gunden offered to plant, maintain and harvest five acres of soybeans for the FRB project if a group within the church would help cover the costs of seeds, fertilizer and rent for the field. Widmer thought immediately of the fifth- and sixth-grade class.

"It's a way they can express their willingness to contribute to the world, to follow Jesus' example of caring for others. It's a tangible way of giving their money and their love," says Widmer.

She says funds will go toward an MCC project through FRB, but a particular project hadn't been chosen yet.

Students wrote letters to their parents explaining the project and asking to do extra tasks around the house to raise money for it.

"I was excited to help the church get involved in raising money and giving food," says Emily Stoltzfus, an 11-year-old who learned to play two songs on her violin in exchange for her father's $50 donation to the project. "It's really great to know the food we grow is going to help people."

On the first Sunday in June, the class presented the project to the congregation. Between the worship service and Sunday school, they put coins in large tin buckets and jingled them, collecting coins from worshipers.

"One person even gave a $20 bill," says Jesse Loewen, 11.

The class raised some $175 in the time between the church service and Sunday school. They were to collect coins again the first Sundays in July and August.

And students continue to raise their own funds.

Loewen has been mowing the lawn, cleaning his room and doing other chores to raise money from his parents. Takoda Friesen, 11, was part of a group that went out to Gunden's farm and helped clear another field of all the rocks bigger than a fist. He took the $10 Gunden paid each student and donated it to the project.

Gunden rents the land where the soybeans are planted, and the owner reduced rent for this season after learning of the project. Gunden's regular suppliers donated seed and fertilizer.

The project began with MCC Great Lakes regional associate Gwen Gustafson-Zook coming in to talk to the class about world hunger.

"She helped the kids see the bigger picture," says Eileen Becker-Hoover, Sunday school teacher. "She helped them understand there is enough food to feed everyone. But (people) are hungry because of war, because they have to export food, because there isn't enough water."

And the learning didn't just focus on hunger. Gunden, one of two farmers in College Mennonite, also came to class to talk to youth about the process of planting and harvesting the field.

"I thought maybe this would be a chance to show some of the kids how agriculture works, what it takes to plant a crop and harvest it" Gunden says.

When he came to talk to the class, he drew out on the board the economics of a farming operation, the costs and the potential gains and later invited students to come out for planting in May.

The soybeans will be harvested in late September, another opportunity for students to gather.

And he hopes the project will also spark a sense of giving in students' own lives.

"Hopefully by me being a little bit generous, it helps them see how they can be generous with other people," Gunden says. For more about the Foods Resource Bank, go to www.foodsresourcebank.org.—*Marla Pierson Lester of MCC*

Hopefully by me being a little bit generous, it helps them see how they can be generous with other people.
—Tom Gunden

Conference pursues greener gatherings

Indiana-Michigan Conference uses mugs to save about 2,000 styrofoam cups.

The 350-plus Mennonites who attended the Indiana-Michigan Conference Assembly at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., June 14-16 encountered a few changes in the registration line.

First, they filled out a transportation survey describing how they traveled to the conference and how far they came. Later, they chose a mug to keep with them throughout the event.

The transportation survey was used to calculate the approximate cost to the environment in terms of miles traveled, gallons of gas burned and CO^2 emitted. The mugs kept about 2,000 styrofoam cups out of the landfill.

Both measures were part of a greening effort inspired by feedback from previous years' delegates.

Heidi King, logistics coordinator for the conference, enlisted volunteers from Mennonite Creation Care Network and the Michiana Mennonite Earth Group to work with these questions, and a planning group pursued issues related to transportation, food, recycling and facility.

The assembly registration form asked attendees to bring their own mug to use at breaks. For those who forgot, planners gathered a collection of spare mugs from local congregations. Food providers were asked to avoid disposables when possible and recycling bins were available for all waste.

Most attendees responded positively to the mug idea.

"It is a small step, but it represents the fact that change is possible and we can all be a part of it," says one attendee.

At the close of the Indiana-Michigan assembly, Lois Kaufmann, local coordinator, announced the results of the transportation survey: the group drove between 20,000 and 30,000 miles in order to be together. This required at least 1,000 gallons of fuel, cost at least $3,000 at the gas pump and emitted at least 10 tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

"We recognize that our activities, even those that are important and worthwhile, take a toll on the earth," Kaufmann says. Assembly planners acknowledged this fact with two gifts for the benefit of the earth: Indiana-Michigan Conference gave a garden cart to Goshen (Ind.) College for students to use when hauling recyclables and made a donation to a tree-planting project in Haiti through Mennonite Central Committee.

Prizes were also awarded for the greatest distance biked, greatest distance walked, largest carpool, best gas mileage and most creative travel arrangements.

At least 13 Indiana-Michigan participants walked a total of at least 44 miles in order to attend the annual sessions. Most walkers lived nearby, but a few were out-of-towners with lodging within walking distance. Several people in their 80s braved the June heat on foot.

Trish Shenk, Goshen, Ind., walked about five miles between her house and College Mennonite Church.

Shenk's family is working at using their vehicles less often. Each day her family is able to go the whole day without using a car, they put $10 in a special fund.

"It is stretching me to realize I don't need to get out a car every time I need to run to the bank or the store; I can bike or walk," Shenk says.

We recognize that our activities, even those that are important and worthwhile, take a toll on the earth.—Lois Kaufmann

Ken Hollinger, Wildwood Mennonite Church, Engadine, Mich., who walked nine miles during the assembly, says being away from home gave him the leisure to travel more slowly.

"I was able to walk because I had no meetings and my cell phone was broken. It was bliss," he says.

At least seven people arrived by bicycle, logging a total of at least 71 miles.

"I was encouraged to see a full bike rack," says Doug Kaufman, pastor of Benton Mennonite Church in Goshen, who expected to bike about eight miles attending the assembly.

First place in the biking category went to Neil Amstutz, pastor at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, who biked 21 miles in transit. Amstutz, a biker, recommends that people interested in biking invest in a lightweight bicycle.

Another green feature of the 2007 Indiana-Michigan Conference annual assembly was a workshop entitled "Stewardship of Creation as an Act of Faith."

Led by Luke Gascho, the seminar addressed the question, How does care of the earth fit into congregational life, thought and action? Gascho is executive director of Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen College.

King intends for green efforts to be a part of next year's gathering.

"We are adding another volunteer position to our planning—earth stewardship coordinator," she says.—*Jennifer Halteman Schrock*

Bethel College receives funds for prairies

Kansas prairie restoration projects reflect tradition and produce new findings

Jon Piper's interest in prairie preservation and restoration puts him solidly within tradition. Piper, professor of biology at Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., recently learned that his second grant proposal to the Kingsbury Family Foundation for the prairie restoration project he began on campus a year ago has been funded. To date the project has received more than $36,000 from the foundation.

Kingsbury is a private foundation with particular interest in projects aimed at protecting the natural resources of the Great Plains, especially plant and animal habitat.

"Ecological restoration is an important part of 21st-century conservation," Piper says. "There probably isn't enough [native] prairie left to protect many endangered native species, so it's going to require restoration of original or indigenous habitat."

Ecological restoration is an important part of 21st-century conservation. —Jon Piper

In addition to the prairie restoration project, Bethel is in possession of two tracts of virgin, or never-plowed, prairie. One of them, the Sand Prairie Preserve in western Harvey County, came into the college's possession in February 1965. It has the distinction of being the first project in Kansas to be supported by the Nature Conservancy.

Dwight Platt, Bethel professor emeritus of biology, was instrumental in establishing the Sand Prairie Preserve. He was co-chair of a statewide committee that raised one-third of the cost of the land, with the Nature Conservancy providing a third and Bethel College's development staff raising the other third.

At the time Bethel acquired Sand Prairie, Platt was quick to credit the late J.H. Doell, head of the college's biology department for more than 40 years beginning in 1911, with pioneer studies of the sandhills area, including building a collection of sandhills plants.

Melanie Zuercher

From left, Jon Piper, Bethel College biology professor; Barry Bartel, Bethel president; Dwight Platt, Bethel professor emeritus of biology; and Richard Zerger, Bethel chemistry professor gather at the college's Broadie Prairie Preserve in Cowley County, Kan.

Platt himself served as research assistant for a field study of snake populations begun in the sandhills in 1959 under the auspices of a National Science Foundation grant to the University of Kansas zoology department. Bethel students have continued tracking those populations to the present day.

South and east in Cowley County, Bethel owns a section of tallgrass prairie called the Broadie Prairie Preserve, named in honor of Wilber and Rhoda Pennington Broadie by their two surviving children, who gave the area to Bethel College in May 1993.

Broadie Prairie is also an 80-acre tract that includes typical tallgrass vegetation and bird and animal life.

About half the land has been in the Conservation Reserve Program, which provides an interesting contrast to the unplowed acres. A local farmer manages Broadie Prairie and cuts prairie hay, with some proceeds going to the college.

In the late 1980s, when Wanda Broadie Alexander wanted to donate her 80 acres, several potential recipients, such as Southwestern College and the Audubon Society, turned her down. However, since the establishment of the National Tallgrass Prairie Preserve in Chase County in 1996, there has been far more interest at the university research level in prairie study and preservation.

Over the last decade or so, Piper, along with several students, has conducted comparative studies of the effects of some environmental change on the vegetation composition on both prairies.

In 2005, he and Bethel biology students Danielle Billings and Vanessa Leite published an article in *Community Ecology* documenting how changes in nitrogen deposits can significantly alter the species composition of sand prairie vegetation.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to have two 'old-growth' prairies available for research," Piper says. "Changes in the makeup of these areas can signal how natural areas may respond to changes in the global environment."

Piper's prairie restoration work is also receiving attention in the scientific press. Last month, Piper's article "Does the number of species in a seed mix affect the establishment of four tallgrass prairie species? A seven-year study in Kansas" appeared in *Ecological Restoration* and another, "Effects of species richness on resident and target species components in a prairie restoration," coauthored with Bethel students Angela Janzen and Emily Schmidt, appeared in *Restoration Ecology.*
—Melanie Zuercher of Bethel College

Peace program offers global friendships

180 people from 40 countries gather for six-week peace building institute.

War and violence will not bring social harmony and lasting peace to Iraq, says Sister Helen, an Iraqi citizen now living in Lebanon.

"We cannot have security with violence," she says. Sister Helen was one of 14 participants sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee to attend the 12th annual Summer Peacebuilding Institute, a program of Eastern Mennonite University's Center for Justice and Peace building in Harrisonburg, Va., May 7-June 19.

"We can only have security with love, understanding, cooperation and acceptance. We have to start with ourselves to have this love and peace. If I don't live in love and live in peace myself, I can't share it with others," she says.

This six-week program brought together 180 people from 40 countries. All participants have experience in peace building, human rights and relief programs.

"We are from different countries, cultures and religions, but the goal in our hearts and minds is the same—our main goal is peace and justice," says Fatemeh Darabi, who has studied Middle East history and now is working as an English translator for an oil company in Iran.

Brenda Burkholder

Sister Helen and Fatemeh Darabi participate in a six-week peace building program at Eastern Mennonite University's Center for Justice and Peace building in Harrisonburg, Va.

Both women say the course work and living on campus with people from other countries provided excellent opportunities for participants to develop a deeper understanding of conflict mediation and peacemaking processes.

Sister Helen left Iraq in May 2006, when a priest from her church was killed and her convent in Baghdad was closed. In Baghdad she worked with youth and women. She now works with orphans and the elderly in Beirut.

Relations between Muslims and Christians in Iraq have deteriorated since the war began in 2003, says Sister Helen. "Before 2003, we lived with Muslims safely. Since 2003, all things have changed," she says.

The problem is not between us as people but between our governments.
—Fatemeh Darabi

Sister Helen would like to see religious leaders in Iraq—Christian and Muslim—provide training and leadership to help people study and analyze the underlying reasons for conflict between religious groups and the importance of working for peace.

This was Fatemeh's first visit to the United States. Her dream is to return to Eastern Mennonite University as a student and eventually earn a doctorate in Middle East history.

A highlight of the six-week program, she says, was developing cross-cultural friendships.

"Before I came, I wasn't sure about attitudes toward Iranian people," she says. "I found people from North America to be friendly and warm. The problem is not between us as people but between our governments." She notes that participants also had misconceptions about Iran. Most participants, she says, were surprised to learn that more than 60 percent of students attending universities in Iran are women.—*Gladys Terichow of Mennonite Central Committee*

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Thai laborer now serves the church

Uthane Inchai builds a church during 10-month internship in Thailand.

Sweat dripping down his brow, Uthane Inchai bent his aching back down to grab a long piece of wood from the endless pile. His arm flinched back to find several splinters sticking into his hand.

Why am I working at this stupid construction yard? I mean, what am I doing in life, and where will this get me? he asked himself.

His foreman's shouts brought him back to his senses.

Inchai's life was not too uncommon for a young Thai man in 2000—working in Singapore, separated from his new wife and baby daughter for the chance to earn enough to support his family. He was working just to work and felt lost, alone and without a future.

Fast-forward seven years. Inchai again works, fierce sun beating down on his back, on the site of a local building project. This is not Singapore though, this is Borabu, Thailand, and this is not a typical building.

He is working to help build a church, the first of its kind in the area, for the community he now serves. Now dedicated to serving God and his church, he believes that God, not a Singapore job, will provide for his family and all his needs.

Inchai and his wife, Jiep, are completing a 10-month internship with Living Water Church in Borabu, close to his home village of Kootmek.

The building on which he works should be completed in October, according to Pat Houmphan, a worker with Living Water through Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network, and will include a community center—something not found in the Borabu area. Funds for the church have come through donations and a grant from the Schowalter Foundation.

As his daughter watches, Uthane Inchai plays drums during a Christmas celebration in Ban Daeng, Thailand.

Courtesy of Pat Houmphan

For the couple, the service to the church and community are about gratitude—gratitude toward a God who provides not only a living but life.

Inchai first went to church in Singapore only to be taught the guitar, but he learned more than just chords; he learned about Jesus. Every additional Sunday taught him more, and Uthane eventually accepted Jesus into his life.

After three years working in Singapore, years when he worked tirelessly and missed the chance to watch his daughter grow up, Inchai returned to Kootmek village in Thailand in 2003. Although excited to reunite with his family once more, he was unsure what was about to happen to his faith. Kootmek had no other Christians around him, and like almost every village in Thailand, the Buddhist belief and culture dominated Kootmek.

Inchai was convinced that his relationship with Jesus was over. But after his return home, Inchai became deathly ill and cried out to God for healing, promising he would dedicate his life to God.

Inchai was diagnosed with leptospirosis, a disease transmitted by rat urine so deadly that those infected rarely lived more than three or four days without treatment.

Inchai's survival, with the lack of treatment, was amazing. After he recovered, Inchai remembered his promise and sought out Houmphan and his wife, Rad, in nearby Borabu and shared his story and desire to serve God with them.

The Houmphans and the church saw Inchai's genuine desire and in 2004 decided to send Uthane and his family to Prayao Bible College, where they studied to become church leaders.
—Philip Houmphan for Mennonite Mission Network

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CALENDAR

Cleveland University Hospital's 1W reunion, Aug. 23. Targeting years 1952-1957, but all others welcome. RSVP to Maynard Miller, PO Box 367, Hartville, OH 44632. Phone: 330-877-3326 or 330-877-9433 or Earl Sommers at 330-877-9437.

A week-long ***intentional interim pastor training*** will be held Mon.-Fri., Oct. 29-Nov. 2 at the **Lancaster Mennonite Conference Center, Lancaster, Pa**. This seminar is sponsored by Atlantic Coast, Eastern District, Franconia and Lancaster conferences and is open to leaders in any MC USA or MC Canada conference. Dale Stoltzfus and Ken Bechtel will be the primary instructors. The registration fee is $200. For more information or to register, contact Laura Livengood, 717-293-5246 or llivengood@lancasterconference.org. View the brochure at www.lancasterconference.org.

Turpin (Okla.) Mennonite Church will celebrate its ***100th anniversary*** Sept. 1-2. For more information, call Pastor Jeff Wintermote at 580-259-6440 or visit www.turpinmennonitechurch.com.

WORKERS

Berry, Michael J., was licensed as minister of youth and children's ministries at Christ Fellowship, Allentown, Pa., on June 3.

Deal, Michael, lead pastor at Agape Fellowship, Williamsport, Pa., resigned effective June 30.

Gingerich, Firman, ended a term as pastor at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on July 15.

Gingerich, Jennifer, was licensed for special ministry to youth ministry and for work with the Southeast Keizer Community Center at Salem Mennonite Church, Salem. Ore., on June 17.

Gingrich, Ann, was ordained at Belmont Mennonite Church for work in overseer ministry on June 17.

Gonsman, Elsie M., was ordained as pastor at Roaring Spring Mennonite Church, Roaring Spring, Pa., on July 15.

Jensen, Russell, was installed as pastor at Belmont Neighborhood Fellowship, Elkhart, Ind., on July 15.

Miller, Daniel Z., ended a term as interim pastor at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind., on June 30.

Weishaupt, Aimee, was licensed for ministry at Silverwood Mennonite Church on June 24.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Berkey, Andrew Michael and **Michael Lynn**, July 11, to Michael and Nicole Greenawalt Berkey, Harrisonburg, Va.

Buller, Ty Austin, July 2, to Shane and Letha Funk Buller, Laramie, Wyo.

Clark, Connor Lee, July 8, to Eric and Erin Steinbrey Clark, Wooster, Ohio.

Crossgrove, Tara Lynn, May 15 to Trevor and Julie Sauder Crossgrove, Wauseon, Ohio.

Davies, Abigail Grace, July 17, to Jim and Theresa Miller Davies, Grove City, Pa.

Detweiler, Jenna Elizabeth, April 9. to Marc and Jody Sensenig Detweiler, Green Lane, Pa.

Eash-Scott, John Reuben, June 27, to Peter and Rachel Eash-Scott, Lancaster, Pa.

Estell, Rebecca Anne, June 19, to John and Melinda Geithmann Estell, Bluffton, Ohio.

Frederick, Paige Nichole, June 29, to John and Sherry Michener Frederick, Schwenksville, Pa.

Goings, Braylon Carnell, July 13, to Tyson and Andrea Lehman Goings, Lima, Ohio

Hall, Ethan Lawrence, June 27, to Nathan and Sara Hill Hall, Newton, Kan.

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Hostetter, Elisa Ann, June 22, to Dean and Christy Henderson Hostetter, Lyndhurst, Va.

Kern, Kendra Janel, July 9, to Shaun and Kari Wenger Kern, Goshen, Ind.

Lapp, Shelby Mae, May 17, to Andrew and Michelle Hager Lapp, Telford, Pa.

Leatherman, Esther Sophia, July 10, to Mark and Ruth Glick Leatherman, Christiana, Pa.

Leichty, Justin Michael, July 18, to Michael and Melanie Schotsman Leichty, Wellman, Iowa.

Loewer, Iris Ruth Classen, June 29, to Ryan Loewer and Suzanne Classen, Boulder, Colo.

Loker, Noah David, June 3, to Trey and Annette Helmuth Loker, Harrisonburg, Va.

Merrill, Ryan Daniel, July 10, to Jesse and Erica Landis Merrill, Wayne, Pa.

Miller, Nadia Jade, June 30, to Todd and Teresa Underwood Miller, Lyndhurst, Ohio.

Mullins, Brooke Taylor, June 27, to Don and Kristin Mullins, Creston, Ohio.

Nussbaum, Gregory Raymond, May 22, to Todd and Megan Nussbaum, Columbus, Ohio.

Oberholtzer, Quinn Thomas, June 25, to Thomas and Denise Ebenshade Oberholtzer, Penn Laird, Va.

Orban, Nathaniel Scott, May 14, to Andy Orban and Becky Scott, Charlottesville, Va.

Pachis, Landon Michael, June 29, to Chris and Jeanine Kauffman Pachis, Dalton, Ohio.

Sauder, Addison Paige, July 20, to Kevin and Dawn Witmer Sauder, Mt. Joy, Pa.

Slagell, Alli Elizabeth, to Justin and Cherilen Slagell, Hydro, Okla.

Stitely, Reece Tyler, June 12, to Caleb and Sarah Miller Stitely, Harrisonburg, Va.

Trost, Colin Mack, July 1, to Diron and Alison Trissel Trost, Harrisonburg, Va.

Yoder, Tristan Lucas, July 24, to Zach and Abby Leake Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va.

MARRIAGES

Andrews/Bain: Joy Andrews, South Bend, Ind., and Albert Bain, San Diego, Calif., July 14, at Cabrillo National Monument.

Andrews/Griffin: Jonathan Andrews, Lexington, Ky., and Sharon Griffin, Cincinnati, Aug. 1, at Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Ind.

Baker/Schultz: Jeremy Baker, Fulks Run, Va., and Lisa Schultz, Bridgewater, Va., June 16, at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Brandenberger/Lehman: Josh Brandenberger, LaGrange, Ind., and Melissa Lehman, Topeka, Ind., June 23, at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Brubacher/Ceres: Anne Brubacher, North Newton, Kan., and Pablo Ceres, Spain, June 30, at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Callahan/Miller: Karen Callahan, Alliance, Ohio, and Keith Miller, Louisville, Ohio, July 6, at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

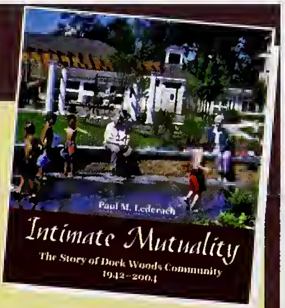
Cerling/Eash: Jamie Cerling, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., and Jason Eash, Archbold, Ohio, June 16, at Baker Street Community Church, Wisconsin Rapids.

Deavers/Muzikantova: John Deavers, Lowville, N.Y., and Kamila Muzikantova, Czech Republic, July 14, at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville.

Dukes/Ensz: Denise Dukes, Newton, Kan., and Jonathan Ensz, Goessel. Kan., June 2, at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton.

Fintel/Graber: Ashley Fintel, Custar, Ohio, and Brett Graber, Wauseon, Ohio, June 23, at St. Johns Lutheran Church, Deshler, Ohio.

Flanigan/Kennel: Kelly Flanigan, Metamora, Ill., and Derrek Kennel, Low Point, Ill., June 9, at Tremont, Ill.



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Goerzen/Krehbiel: Peter Goerzen, Goessel, Kan., and Katherine Krehbiel, Goessel, July 16, at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Horst/Tobin: Stephen Horst, Italy/Virginia, and Bethany Tobin, Thailand/Virginia, July 21, at Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church.

Jantzi/Lehman: Sarah Jantzi, Lowville, N.Y., and Ryan Lehman, Lowville, July 21, at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville.

Kennel/Weaver: Denae Kennel, Salem, Ore., Arlington, Va., Benjamin J. Weaver, Telford, Pa., June 23, at Salem Mennonite Church.

Landis/Rittenhouse: Dan Landis, Tylersport, Pa., Courtney Rittenhouse, Harleysville, Pa., June 30 in Lancaster, Pa.

Martin/Miller: Anita Martin, Ronks, Pa., and Joshua Miller, Reinholds, Pa., July 14, in Ronks, Pa.

Miller/Nippert: Robert Miller, Jr., Millersburg, Ohio, and Alexandria Laurel Nippert, Millersburg, June 30, at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church, Walnut Creek, Ohio.

Miller/Yoder: Rebekah Miller, Plain City, Ohio, and Derrick Yoder, Plain City, June 23, at Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City.

Nafziger/Spurgeon: Ezra Nafziger, Pottstown, Pa., and Regina Spurgeon, Lansdale, Pa., July 21, at Kolb Farm, Spring City, Pa.

Newhouse/Voth: Jeremy Newhouse, Moundridge, Kan., and Emily Voth, Walton, Kan., May 25, at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Shumaker/Stauffer: Rebecca Sue Shumaker, Archbold, Ohio, and Nathaniel Robert Stauffer, Fort Wayne, Ind., June 9, in Archbold, Ohio.

DEATHS

Baer, Laura Crossgrove, 89, Archbold, Ohio, died June 21. Spouse: Clarence Baer (deceased). Parents: Charles and Mary Wyse Crossgrove. Children: John, Judith Kulp, Nathan, Mark, Joseph; 15 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; nine step-great-grandchildren. Memorial service: July 1 at West Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Bowen, Carolyn Jean Kropf, 60, Charlottesville, Va., died June 22 of cancer. Spouse: James Edward Bowen. Parents: Fred Vernon and Velma Arlene Neuschwander Kropf. Children: Janel Lynne Bowen Early, Brent Alan; one grandchild. Memorial service, June 28 at Belmont Baptist Church, Charlottesville.

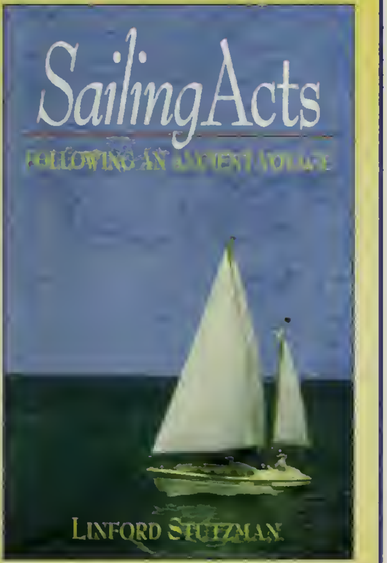
Champagne, Claudia Eulalie Bergeron, 84, Des Allemands, La., died July 7 of pneumonia. Spouse: Clarence Joseph Champagne (deceased). Parents: Adam Abel and Lize Stephanie Griffin Bergeron. Child: Shirley LeBlanc; one grandchild; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 12 at Des Allemands Mennonite Church.

Detweiler, Ernest S., 72, Blooming Glen, Pa., died July 13 of cancer. Spouse: Mabel H. Histand Detweiler (deceased). Parents: Harvey and Anna Stover Detweiler. Children: E. Ray, Loren W.; five grandchildren. Funeral: July 15 at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie, Pa.

Dueck. Ronald James, 61, Goshen, Ind., died July 11 of cancer. Spouse: Deloris "Dee" Schwartz Dueck. Parents: Arthur and Alice Roth Dueck. Children: Jocelyn Powell, Joel; two grandchildren. Funeral: July 14 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Egli, Glen Herbert, 72, Mesa, Ariz., July 10. Spouse: Ardi (Goehring) Egli. Parents: John B. and Rosie O. Egli (deceased). Children: Jeffrey, Cheryl Roth, Linda Kym, Ann Kaiser; 12 grandchildren, one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 14 at Hopedale (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Epp, Richard Earl, 82, Buhler, Kan., died July 12. Parents: Henry and Anna Janzen Epp. Funeral: July 16 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.



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Gingerich, Marian R. Zehr, 94, Lowville, N.Y., died April 15. Spouse: Allen Gingerich (deceased). Parents: Joseph M. and Lydia Roggie Zehr. Children: Emanuel, John, Eunice Roggie; 11 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 18 at Lowville Mennonite Church.

Guhr, Rena Dwaine, 52, Goessel, Kan., died June 18 of complications following open heart surgery. Spouse: Connie Lyon Guhr. Parents: Daniel and Velma Schmidt Guhr. Children: Jason, Charissa Guhr, Kendra Guhr, Nevin, Nathaniel; one grandchild. Funeral: July 22 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Herzler, Norman Lloyd, 83, Mechanicsburg, Pa., died June 18 of renal failure. Spouse: Ruth Harnish Hertzler. Parents: Owen Amos and Alta Rohrer Hertzler (deceased). Children: Duane, Dale, Dean, Julia, Jeanette; nine grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 22 at Slate Hill Mennonite Church, Mechanicsburg.

Hess, Arthur S., 84, Leola, Pa., died June 27. Spouse: Norma E. Landis Hess. Parents: Norman L. and Helen Snavely Hess. Children: Mary Ann Scherpf, Frederick, Gerald, Catherine Figart; eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 30 at Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Kauffman, Ruby Jo, 75, Englewood, Colo., died July 4. Parents: Sherman Christian and Martha Hershey Kauffman. Funeral: July 8 at First Mennonite Church, Denver.

Lehman, Merle Z., 96, Croghan, N.Y., died July 12. Spouse: Helen Makuch Koster Lehman. Parents: Andrew and Anna Zehr Lehman. Children: Merritt, Judith Polk, Jean Stevens, Eric; eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 16 at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville, N.Y.

Martin, Miriam, 64, East Earl, Pa., died July 3 after a brief illness. Spouse: Bob Martin. Parents: Isabell and Elton Meyers (both deceased). Children: Sonia Straley, Robert Martin and Jeffrey Martin; nine grandchildren. Funeral: July 21 at Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Gordonville, Pa.

Miller, Clifford D., 72, Allen, Md., died June 10 of heart-related problems. Spouse: Phyllis Kolb Miller. Parents: Lester and Clara Miller. Children: Carol Aydelotte, Vicki Gragen, Juli Anderson; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: June 24 at Holly Grove Mennonite Church, Westover, Md.

Miller, Ethel B. Burkhart, 92, Landisville, Pa., died July 16. Spouse: Rev. Arthur H. Miller. Parents: William R. and Amanda N. Breneman Burkhart. Children: Edwin B., Barbara Ann Brubaker, Marian Jean Lefever, Milton, Dr. Richard B.; 17 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 20 at Landisville Mennonite Church.

Miller, Rosa Bontrager, 90, Middlebury, Ind., died June 24. Spouse: Manasses C. Miller (deceased). Parents: John I. and Barbara Miller Bontrager. Children: Vicki Fidler, Linda Stemm; nine grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 27 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury.

Mumaw, Lavinia Hilty, 98, Orrville, Ohio, died June 26. Spouse: Stanford Mumaw (deceased). Parents: Philip and Mary Steiner Hilty. Children: Maxine Yoder, Elsie Hartzler Maiwurm, Lucille Shank, Lloyd, Loretta Baur; 14 grandchildren; 33 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: June 29 at Martins Mennonite Church, Orrville.

Neufeld, Archie Wilbur, 76, Loveland, Colo., died June 20 of cancer. Spouse: Anna Ruth Cutrell Neufeld. Parents: Edwin J. and Alma Karber Neufeld. Children: Daniel Dwight, Jo Ellen, Cheryl Dawn; eight grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: June 30 at First Mennonite Church, Denver.

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The **Salem Mennonite Church**, located near the growing community of Tofield, Alberta, (45 minutes Southeast of Edmonton) is seeking a ***lead pastor*** to minister to our congregation of 125 people. The successful candidate will have previous pastoral experience and/or a bachelor of theology degree or equivalent. Compensation will be commensurate with qualifications. Interested people should forward their resumés to: Carla Fendelet, Secretary, Salem Mennonite Church, Box 56, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0, Canada; fax: 780-662-0106; email: cgfen@telus.net.

Goshen College seeks a director of ***alumni, church & parent relations***. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page: http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alberta. This vibrant, multigenerational, urban congregation of approximately 200 members, is seeking a ***half-time associate pastor*** with primary responsibilities for youth and young adults. The successful candidate will work with the lead pastor and with other leadership people of the congregation. Some pulpit and spiritual care ministries will also be expected. A seminary degree or a related Bachelor's degree that reflects our Anabaptist/Mennonite beliefs and practices is preferred. Starting date is negotiable. For a more detailed job description please visit our Web site at http://edmonton1st.mennonitechurch.ab.ca. Interested applicants should forward questions and resumés to: Wesley Berg, Chair, Second Pastor Search Committee, c/o First Mennonite Church, 3650 - 91 St., Edmonton, AB, Canada, T6E 6P1; 780-436-3431; wberg@ualberta.ca.

English conversation teachers needed. **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

The Fransen Family Foundation invites charitable organizations to apply to receive microgrants. Applications are due Aug. 31. See the foundation's Web site, www.fransenfamilyfoundation.org, for more details.

First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana (Ill.) seeks a ***lead pastor*** to work with a part-time associate pastor for their congregation of 185. Founded in 1964 and located in a university city, FMC's diverse congregation supports a common vision of seeking to be faithful to God's leading—locally and in the broader world. Our diversity includes participants from different Christian denominations, racial and ethnic groups, rural and urban settings and varied educational backgrounds. We are a dynamic church, with membership in both the Illinois and Central District conferences and participate in various international missions, including Mennonite World Conference.

For more information, visit www.prairienet.org/mennonite. The position pays 100 percent of the salary recommended by Mennonite Church USA. Applications will be reviewed as received. We are actively seeking pastoral leadership. Interested candidates should send initial inquiries to Trudy Good, Chair of the Pastor Search Committee, via email at tgood@soltec.net.

Arvada, Colo., Mennonite/Brethren congregation seeks ***lead pastor*** with experience in evangelism and youth for peace oriented congregation—three-quarter to full-time. Contact: Herm Weaver, 303-258-7589.

Life Skills Training for Recovering Addicts Program. Three openings: full-time ***houseparents***, part-time ***office manager***, part-time ***program supervisor***. The Bowery Mission Women's Center at Heartsease Home, 216 E. 70th St., New York, NY 10021. Send resumé to Melissa Alcorn at malcorn@chaonline.org.

Zion Mennonite Church in Souderton, Pa., is seeking a dynamic musician, conductor and song leader to continue an excellent worship tradition and take it to a new level. A complete job description for the position of ***minister of worship*** will be developed around the gifts of the candidate. Choir directing, worship planning, song leading and leadership of praise teams will be important roles of this ministry position. With interest contact Pastor Hunter Hess, 215-723-3592 during the day or 215-257-1115 evenings. Or email hunter@zionmennonite.org.

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Eating is a holy act

Regina Shands Stoltzfus is a dissertation fellow at Goshen (Ind.) College during this academic year. She is working on a doctorate in theology and ethics at Chicago Theological Seminary.

Food is a good gift of God. Eating is a pleasurable activity—so much so that for many of us in the West it is an activity we overindulge in to the detriment of our health. But the fact remains that eating and enjoying food are a part of creation that God has declared "good." And it is at God's pleasure that we have this pleasure. I imagine God could have chosen to construct humanity in such a way that fueling our bodies took a radically different form. But God the Creator chose to give us food and to make the production, preparation and consumption of food a satisfying experience for our physical bodies.

Yet our souls are nurtured as well. The act of eating—of being at table with one another—is vital for the way we construct family and community. Recently my husband, daughter and I had a restaurant meal together. Perusing the menu and its adventurous (to a 15-year-old) fare, Rachel announced she was hungry for "real" food: baked beans, greens—she listed several other items, all foods that reminded me of the family gatherings of my childhood. She also noted that she was considering doing like Grandma Joyce, my mother, and carrying a bottle of hot sauce with her wherever she goes. Food connects us with our families.

Just as the act of eating can connect us with our local and global families, the reality of brokenness in the world disrupts the good of the created order and breaks apart families and communities.

The foods we learn to eat as children anchor us within our cultures and give us a bridge to other cultures. Witness the proliferation of "ethnic" food categories in many local groceries, often corresponding with immigration patterns, or consider restaurants that experiment with food fusion, creating new categories of tastes by combining different regional cuisines.

Food marks the important moments of celebration and transition in communal life—weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations. We bring food to those who are ill and to their families as we care for them; we cook for the bereaved and sit and eat with them.

In the Gospels, Jesus illustrates the good news of God's kingdom when he and the disciples are at table with people or when they are in a situation in which people need to be fed. We see Jesus, after a day of teaching and preaching, looking upon the crowds and having compassion on them, then telling the bewildered disciples to give them something to eat. Jesus raises the synagogue leader's daughter from the dead, and once she is up and about, he says to give her something to eat. Jesus tells Zaccheaus that "today I must come to your house," where they share a meal. Jesus insists that the biblical mandate to love one's neighbor includes loving enemies, and one way to demonstrate this love is by eating with them. Jesus declares himself the bread of life, and after his death, some of the disciples recognize the risen Lord in the act of Jesus breaking bread. Clearly something profound is happening at the table with Jesus and with the gathered community. The act of eating is a holy thing.

And herein lies a paradox. This gift of God is for all people everywhere; the need for food is universal. Yet all people everywhere do not have access to food or have enough food or have good food. Just as the act of eating can connect us with our local and global families, the reality of brokenness in the world disrupts the good of the created order and breaks apart families and communities.

War, overdevelopment and corporate greed strip the land of its ability to produce, and people who depend upon the land for food and for their livelihood are driven away. Poor people struggle to have access to nourishing, healthy, affordable food, while their neighbors in affluent areas are overwhelmed by the number of choices in their grocery aisles. Consumer demands for low prices and an economic system that caters to big business sacrifice living wages for those who produce, harvest and process food and good nutrition for those who consume it. Dependence on meat and other animal products raises questions for many about how we as humans live peacefully with the rest of creation—with animals and the land. Our need for nourishment from food connects us not only to those we sit with at the table; it touches our lives to people we will never see.

Eating is a holy act. It is well worth our careful consideration of how, where, when and with whom we do it.

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

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Baby Bible, Baby Girl Bible and **Baby Boy Bible**, retold by Sarah Toulmin, illustrated by Kristina Stephenson (Good Books, 2007, $14.99, $16.99 and $16.99, respectively), are colorful Bibles that make thoughtful gifts for newborns, christenings or a child's first birthday.

Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends, edited by Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Charles A. Anderson and Michael J. Sleasman (BakerAcademic, 2007, $23.99), helps readers think theologically about our cultural environment and respond faithfully as Christian disciples.

The Triune God: An Essay in Postliberal Theology by William C. Placher (Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, $24.95) connects a radical view of God's transcendence with a narrative Christology. He weaves history of doctrine, cultural analysis and constructive theological reflection.

Invincible Spirits: A Thousand Years of Women's Spiritual Writings, compiled by Felicity Leng (Eerdmans, 2007, $15), brings to life many silent and forgotten voices in this collection of spiritual writings. Writers include the familiar—Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, Christina Rossetti, Emily Dickinson, Corrie ten Boom, Dorothy Day—and the unfamiliar—Raïssa Maritain, Hadewijch, Margiad Evans, Dhuoda.

Wrestling with the Text: Young Adult Perspectives on Scriptures, edited by Keith Graber Miller and Malinda Elizabeth Berry (Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2007, $19.95), includes stories by Yvonne Zimmerman, Chad Martin, Jill Landis, Bethany Spicher Schonberg, Jeremy Garber, Alicia Miller, Sarah Kehrberg, Tasha Clemmer, Jessica King, Kevin Maness, Buffy Garber, Krista Dutt, Daniel Shank Cruz, Benjamin Beachy, Malinda E. Berry, Ryan Beiler, Nancy Tatom Ammerman, Pam Dintaman and Valerie Weaver-Zercher.

Seeking Peace in Africa: Stories from African Peacemakers, edited by Donald E. Miller, Scott Holland, Lon Fendall and Dean Johnson (Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2007, $22.95), is a reply to the World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence. The stories are the hopeful responses of Africans who have lived through horrific violence.

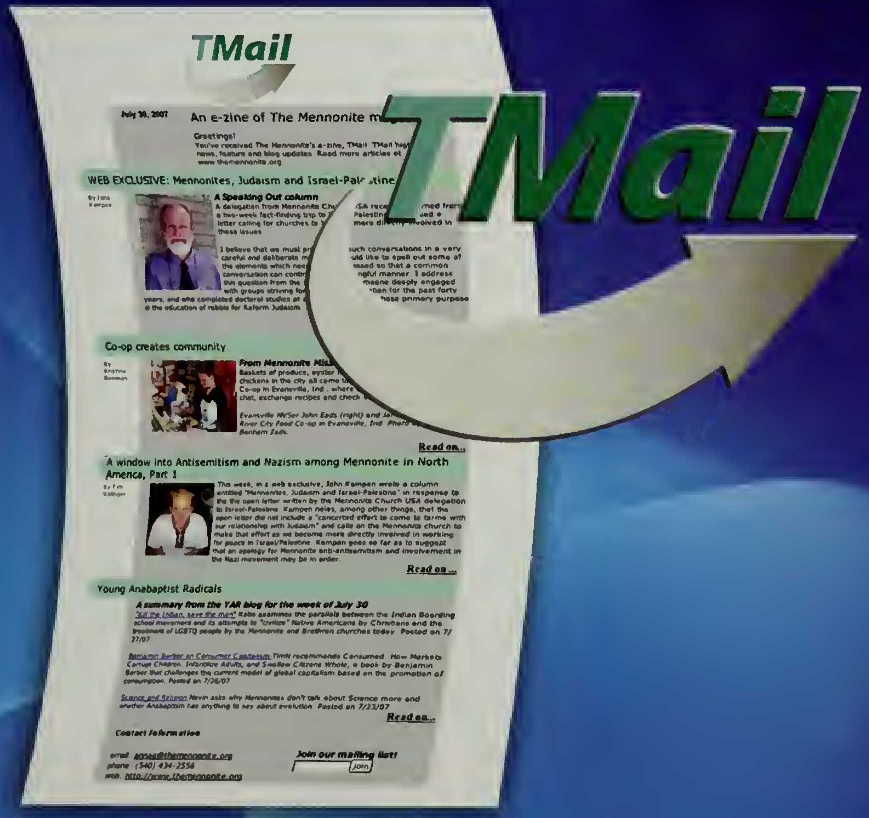
Where We Start: Poems by Debra Gingerich (Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2007, $12.95) probes the intersections of self and other, private and public, and the individual and community.

Domain: Poems by Barbara Nickel (House of Anansi Press, 2007, $18.95) is an elegant, affecting and focused study of the inversion in which the world seems to point back to our childhood home.

That Amazing Junk-Man: The Agony and Ecstacy of a Pastor's Life by Truman H. Brunk (Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2007, $14.95) consists of nearly 75 stories and sermonettes drawn from Brunk's 40 years in the ministry.

Practicing the Politics of Jesus: The Origin and Significance of John Howard Yoder's Social Ethics by Earl Zimmerman (Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2007, $22.95) shows how Yoder's personal and church-related narratives helped shape his theology.

The Last Week: A Day-by Day Account of Jesus' Final Week in Jerusalem by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan (Harper SanFrancisco, 2007, $21.95) offers a new way of understanding the Passion Week and its monumental events, turning the traditional understanding on its head.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July 30, 2007

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WEB EXCLUSIVE: Mennonites, Judaism and Israel-Pal stine

A Speaking Out column

Co-op creates community

From Mennonite Mis

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A window into Antisemitism and Nazism among Mennonite in North America, Part 1

This week, in a web exclusive, John Kampen wrote a column entitled "Mennonites, Judaism and Israel-Palestine" in response to the the open letter written by the Mennonite Church USA delegation to Israel-Palestine. Kampen notes, among other things, that the open letter did not include a "concerted effort to come to terms with our relationship with Judaism" and calls on the Mennonite church to make that effort as we become more directly involved in working for peace in Israel/Palestine. Kampen goes so far as to suggest that an apology for Mennonite anti-antisemitism and involvement in the Nazi movement may be in order.

Read on ...

Young Anabaptist Radicals

A summary from the YAR blog for the week of July 30

"Kill the Indian, save the man" Katie examines the parallels between the Indian Boarding school movement and its attempts to "civilize" Native Americans by Christians and the treatment of LGBTQ people by the Mennonite and Brethren churches today. Posted on 7/27/07

Benjamin Barber on Consumer Capitalism TimN recommends Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole, a book by Benjamin Barber that challenges the current model of global capitalism based on the promotion of consumption. Posted on 7/26/07

Science and Religion Nevin asks why Mennonites don't talk about Science more and whether Anabaptism has anything to say about evolution. Posted on 7/23/07

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Gordon Houser

Cancer lessons

I am with you always.—Matthew 28:20

We are the Lord's.—Romans 14:8

Last November, when Jeanne, my wife, was diagnosed with cancer of the thymus gland, we entered a journey we did not choose, yet we continue to learn the truth that God is with us in all circumstances.

As we told people the news of her diagnosis, their reactions varied. Some expressed concern tinged with fear. Some offered advice on what to do to fight it.

But most said they would pray for us, and many sent emails, letters and cards. Others offered help in tangible ways—meals, hugs, financial help. Jeanne's co-workers and her employer have supported her in many ways.

One lesson from this journey has been that we are surrounded by people who care, who pray for us. This experience helps us see that love is the air we breathe; it is what keeps us going.

I've also learned that we daily face the choice between responding to our circumstances with fear or with love. The more I trust that God is present with us, the less I fear. As 1 John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love."

I've learned that we daily face the choice between responding to our circumstances with fear or with love.

When people confront events like cancer, they often feel a need to find some reason for it. Jeanne must have done something wrong, eaten the wrong foods or failed to exercise properly. Besides being unhelpful, this response makes little sense. Her habits have been better than many who don't have cancer. She also encountered other cancer patients who, for example, never smoked a day in their lives yet developed lung cancer.

Others insist God must have some purpose in this. Perhaps, but I don't believe God caused this cancer for our good. Rather, I believe it just happened, just as much more awful things happen every day, and that God walks with us. Our task, as it were, is to develop awareness of this reality of God's presence.

And God's presence means that each moment is to be lived in that awareness. I'm not to put off sensing God's presence until after we hear the results of the latest CT scan or when Jeanne's nausea diminishes. That Presence is present each moment.

Early on, when friends asked me how I was doing, I said, "I'm living one day at a time." That is a cliché perhaps, yet it has become a necessary way to cope, to live on this journey.

Cancer teaches us we have little control over our lives. We have to live with what is. Certainly there are things we can do. For example, Jeanne cut way back on sugar, which feeds cancer, and changed her diet in other ways. She has taken many other steps to strengthen her immune system. Yet, we learn, there are no guarantees.

I have learned the power of sympathy. Many have said to me, "The spouse of the person with cancer often gets neglected." One man in my church committed himself to pray particularly for me. This means much to me. However, when I talk with other spouses of cancer patients, I feel an immediate sympathy. I feel understood in ways others cannot offer.

Jeanne had a similar experience as she talked with other cancer patients while receiving chemo treatments. I watched them interact and marveled at the immediate camaraderie of strangers.

Last winter, Jeanne's cousin Diane paid for Diane's brother Dave, who has a ministry of healing prayer, to travel to Kansas from Mississippi to pray with us for Jeanne's healing.

While his style of praying is different from mine, I felt greatly loved and strengthened by his prayer. He said, "I pray in hope. I'm going to keep hoping to my grave." It's not right, he said, to deny people hope.

Some who heard about Jeanne's cancer said, "How do you keep going?" You just do. It does no good to despair. You go on in hope, living in God's presence. For "we are the Lord's."—*gh*

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August 21, 2007

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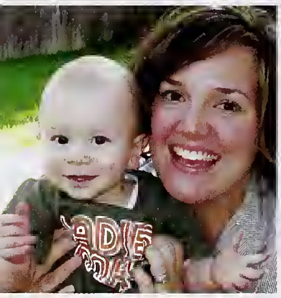
The song of the village



Rachel Gerber (with son Owen) is associate pastor of faith formation at First Mennonite Church in Denver.

A sociologist friend tells me that in a certain tribe in Africa, when a woman wants to have a baby, she sits under a tree and waits there until she hears the song of her unborn child. Then she goes home and teaches it to her husband. During her pregnancy, they teach this song to the village. When she begins labor, the village surrounds the hut and sings this song, which makes up the first words the child hears—it becomes the formational force of who this child is and of what it will become.

What song do we hear? What melody are we called to sing? Psalm 8 speaks of the grandeur of God, the magnificence of creation. Reading between the lines, we hear the writer wondering about his or her status in all this: "I look up at your macro-skies, dark and enormous, your handmade sky-jewelry, / Moon and stars mounted in their settings. / Then I look at my micro-self and wonder, / Why do you bother with us? / Why take a second look our way?" (*The Message*).

Who am I? Do I matter? These are questions we all ask from time to time. But as we place ourselves at the center of the world, we move down a narrowing path that takes us away from the truth. Even in the midst of chaos and noise, this path deafens us to the melody that surrounded us at birth. We have forgotten our birthing song.

Even in this darkness is the village, reminding us who we are. As Psalm 8 exclaims, even in the midst of all the world's beauty, we are cared for and were created far above these. I have seen the village at work in my own church, which allows questions of faith to be asked and validated in youth group. It also calls out and names gifts in our congregation.

To sing this song for one another, we must be like the village in Africa and learn the song ourselves. We must be so rooted in it that we become the song itself. We must not think genuine faith formation can occur in others without first being rooted in God's song for us. Being so rooted begins by listening, quieting ourselves long enough to hear God's melody, a gift.

But this gift is not for us alone. The power of the song comes not only from listening but sharing it with others. As we join our voice with other harmonies, rhythms, tones and pitches, we create such a depth of sound that it reawakens the world.

OK, I wasn't in Africa under a tree. I was in my car, heading home. And I wasn't contemplating having a child. I was two days postpartum. As Shawn and I left the hospital last September, after giving birth to Owen, I wondered what I had gotten myself into as I stared at this little bundle. How would this little person change my life? Would we be good parents? How could I share my hopes and dreams with Owen.

Then, out of nowhere, a melody came to me. The words soon followed:

"Owen, you are so very special.
God has called you, God's very own.
And we hope that one day you'll deeply
know how very loved you are."

I share this because I believe it is the song for all of us—it is God's lullaby to calm our spirits, scatter any fear that may lie at the core of who we are. Above the clamor of this world lies a song for each of us with a similar theme. Truly we are loved deeply, and it is God's hope that each of us discover the fullness of this so that we may be transformed in ways we could never imagine. I also share this so that one day when Owen (and all our children) forget the words to this song, someone will be there to sing it to him again.

For the village. Thanks be to God.

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Missional and Mennonite

John D. Roth hit the mark with his article (July 3). Mennonite Church USA seems to find its way into negative behaviors and mindsets by default, the way water naturally seeks the lowest level. Human nature causes people to take the path of least resistance. We should consider the thoughts of Spirit-led people like Roth, Lynn Miller, John Drescher, Peter Dyck and Nelson Kraybill in the light of Jesus' teaching.

Being intentional is most effective as a witness tool when it's the natural response to what we look to experience through God's perfect love. Surely it's God's wish for us to intentionally love and serve others, teach our children, look for the truth and come to the realization that there are no shortcuts to the kingdom.

When we consider how much the Hebrews' dependence on God in the Old Testament varied, it seems the key was leadership. In spite of our individual responsibility, everyone benefits when our ministers preach the gospel without fear of the inevitable fallout.—*Mark Whitmer, Plain City, Ohio*

I am not just a Mennonite but a Biblist. Many years ago I read *Martyrs' Mirror*. When I realized what it cost my forebears to endorse the doctrine of nonresistance and nonconformity, I decided I would never be ashamed to be identified as a Mennonite. Thanks to John D. Roth for insight into these doctrines.—*A.M. Keller, Lititz, Pa.*

Thoughts on San José 2007

Re the health-care dilemma facing many Mennonite pastors, I know of two Christian health-care networks that are affordable and offer an easy, efficient solution to this problem: Medi-Share and Samaritan Ministries. Go to www.medishare.org and www.samaritanministries.org. These established groups, with 50,000 and 12,000 members, share each other's expenses.—*Ernie Steiner, Berne, Ind.*

As I viewed the July 6 video of San José 2007 on your Web site, I was moved by the speaker who proclaimed it is not about you but about God, who wants to do something in the world and chose you.

It seemed to me she was speaking to MennoNeighbors, who wrote the statement concerning use of the Confession of Faith, and to those who tended the booth sponsored by MennoNeighbors.

Everett Thomas' editorial (July 24) tried to give a fair picture of delegate response. It might be helpful to the church if a MennoNeighbor who was at San José were asked to describe how the statement was written, experiences at the booth and the healing and hurtful moments felt within the Mennonite family there. We must know more about how it is to be inside the outside.—*Martin Lehman, Goshen, Ind.*

Thanks for the report on San José 2007 (July 24). You did an excellent job of communicating its positive aspects. I wonder about dissenting voices and those who did not find the events of San José as uplifting? Will you follow up with an issue featuring those voices? If not, you run the risk of being a "marketing piece" for the church instead of an independent magazine that presents a complete picture of Mennonite Church USA to your readers.—*Michael Danner, Metamora, Ill.*

Pornography abuses women

After reading about the pornography seminar at San José 2007 (July 24, page 6), I felt sad. The comments from the men's breakout session did not inspire hope: "We want women to know how powerful and important sex is for us, and how strong the sex drive can be." This sounds like justification for the abuse of their partners and women in general.

As the husband of a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, I have experienced with my spouse the devastation misuse of sexuality can cause. I also know that intimacy is not dependent on sexual relations. With the help of a caring pastor and mental health professionals, my wife and I became very close during her recovery, and she was in the driver's seat when it came to sexual encounters. For more than seven years I chose to be celibate in order to help facilitate her healing. No one can tell me sexual urges are so strong they cannot be controlled. Apparently some men are so narcissis-

IN THIS ISSUE

Marriages are under strain, and many end in divorce. Harvey Yoder (page 8) writes that marriages need the support of a healthy congregation. Unfortunately, according to our online poll (page 5), many of the respondents rarely see their congregation provide help for married couples. The rest of this issue includes a variety of pieces, including Debra Sapp-Yarwood's thoughts on being a Mennonite convert (page 12), biblical reflections by Gayle Gerber Koontz (page 13) and Dave Miller (page 14) and a profile of Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church (page 16). With Editor Everett Thomas on a sabbatical, Susan Sommer, chair of the board of The Mennonite, Inc., provides an editorial (page 32) mulling over the varied ways we communicate, sometimes effectively, sometimes not. And Assistant Editor Anna Groff writes our Mediaculture column (page 30) on the film *Sicko*.—*Acting editor* tic that they don't care who they hurt. If this were not true, my spouse would not have had to work through more than 11 years of therapy.

Also I do not understand the comment "Male sexuality has become neutered in our society. Sexual energy—even the positive kind—has come to be seen as bad or wrong. We want to reclaim our sexuality as a gift from God." It is a gift from God. If we feel a need to reclaim it, we need to look at our sexual thoughts and practices.

The women's breakout comments need to be read and reread by men. Keep in mind that women portrayed in pornography are abused and for the most part have come from abusive families of origin and abusive relationships.—*Donald Gering, Hesston, Kan.*

Letter bears false witness

Bonnie Bergey bears false witness against the organization I founded, Good Information Advocates, when she charges (July 3) that publishing GIA's ad for an alternative San José event was an act of "pandering to racists and anti-Semites."

GIA states on its Web site, www.goodinformation.org, that it is neither "racist or antiracist." Cultural conditioning prevents many Americans from talking honestly about racial (root-based) differences and from distinguishing between anti-Semitism and a Christ-inspired critique of Talmudic religion and the influence of Judaic elites. Jesus himself challenged "the traditions of the elders" and called his Pharisee adversaries "white-washed tombs" and a "brood of vipers." Esteeming righteousness more than race, GIA critiques all claims of ethnic supremacy—claims not unknown to Mennonites, who have, sadly, often thrown out the baby with the bath water as they replace truth with tolerance and trendiness.

When Bergey writes that "some of the meeting's participants have associated with racist organizations," she neglects to acknowledge the civil liberties dimensions of GIA's outreach efforts, and she may also be forgetting that Jesus himself was condemned for associating with sinners and tax collectors. Far from being called names, GIA ought to be embraced by all Mennonites who believe that nonconformity, truth telling and dialogue are superior to extremist violence.—*Bruce Leichty, Clovis, Calif.*

Don't distinguish 'cradle' and other Mennonites

I was baffled and saddened by the distinction made in "San José 2007 Draws Nearly 6,300" (July 24) between "cradle" and other Mennonite speakers. Perhaps I was overly sensitive because I accompanied Neil, a first-time delegate and our congregational moderator, who is relatively new to Mennonite Church USA, in San José. My daily conversations with Neil helped me see how it feels to attend a Mennonite Church USA Assembly when you don't expect to meet anyone (except those from our congregation) with whom you have any previous connection. Neil worked hard all week to listen and engage and understand what it means to be part of Mennonite Church USA.

Given the emphasis on being a missional church, I wonder how we can suggest that a speaker lineup is not balanced when it contains people such as Jennifer Davis Sensenig, Mary Thiessen Nation and Juan Martinez, who have been serving as pastors and leaders of Mennonite congregations and organizations here in the United States and abroad. How long do people have to be in the family to be truly adopted?

Over 40 percent of the households in my congregation are folks who did not grow up in the Mennonite church. As we work to strengthen the ties between our local and national bodies and between those who grew up Mennonite and those who have come to the church as adults, I hope we can move beyond distinctions such as "cradle" and "professed" Mennonites and create a new, more hospitable identity.—*Joetta Handrich Schlabach, St. Paul, Minn.*

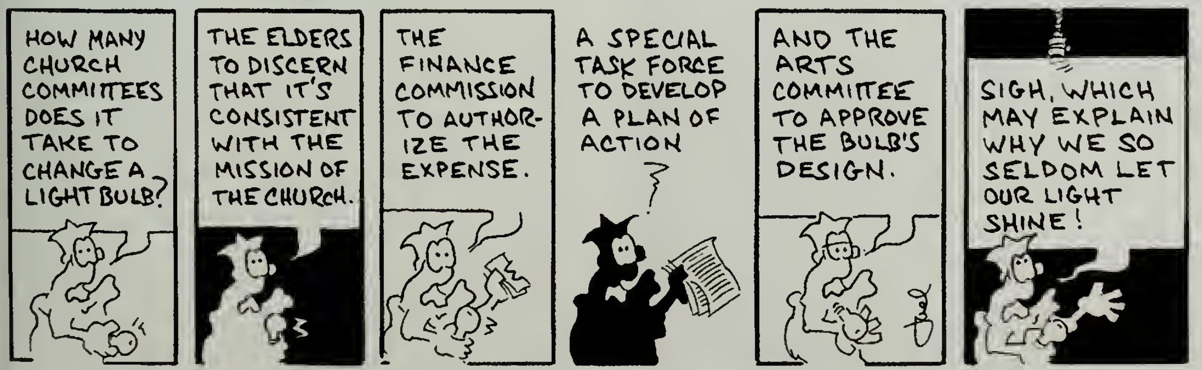
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

I have seen my church provide help for married couples in the congregation: (38 votes)

- ○ Often (32%)
- ○ Rarely (47%)
- ○ Never (11%)
- ○ Unsure (11%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


HOW MANY CHURCH COMMITTEES DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE A LIGHT BULB?
THE ELDERS TO DISCERN THAT IT'S CONSISTENT WITH THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.
THE FINANCE COMMISSION TO AUTHORIZE THE EXPENSE.
A SPECIAL TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION
AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE TO APPROVE THE BULB'S DESIGN.
SIGH, WHICH MAY EXPLAIN WHY WE SO SELDOM LET OUR LIGHT SHINE!

IN BRIEF

Seventy young people serve in MCC's Summer Service Program

Seventy young people are participating in the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Summer Service Program. The program enables people of diverse ethnic backgrounds to work with a church or service agency in their home communities for 10 weeks. MCC U.S. and local congregations support the participants.—*MCC*

Collateral damage?

To investigate the effects of the war on average Iraqi civilians, the *Nation* (July 30) interviewed 50 Iraq war combat veterans. Dozens of the veterans testified to having witnessed the killing of innocent Iraqi civilians, including children—actions that seldom get publicized. The nature of the counterinsurgency conflict makes the soldiers think that every Iraqi is hostile. Also, fighting in densely populated urban areas leads to indiscriminate use of force and many civilian casualties. "A dead Iraqi is just another dead Iraqi," one American soldier said. In a study done by the Pentagon, only 47 percent of soldiers and 38 percent of marines agreed that noncombatants should be treated with respect. After returning home, some felt guilty about the war.—*The Christian Century*

Discipleship, Encounter, Outreach! ends

NEWTON, Kan.—Discipleship, Encounter, Outreach! (DEO), a short-term mission program, has ended. The program that ran from 2006 to 2007 is the final DEO group.

Dwight Regier, director of DEO, says this is the end of DEO but not the end of the vision for a discipleship program, and there is an understanding among DEO staff that they are looking to form something new.

Last year, DEO supported two full teams. but this year it did not have enough participants, says Ryan Miller, news director for Mennonite Mission Network, a partner of DEO.

Darrell Gascho, director of Reaching and Discipling, says there are now discussions between DEO, RAD and other programs to explore possibilities of creating a single discipleship program. Gascho notes the growing similarities between the RAD and DEO programs.

A letter sent to Mennonite Mission Network staff says: "During the past two years DEO and RAD have grown closer together in their mission philosophy, and even though they have their unique characteristics, personalities, pedagogies, etc., they do seem very compatible at this point."

The board, staff and partners want to move quickly to determine how to put together a discipleship and service option as soon as possible, says Miller.

"It's just very early in the decision-making process," he adds.

The DEO program is a partnership of Mennonite Mission Network, Western District Conference, Mountain States Conference, South Central Conference, Central Plains Conference, Hesston (Kan.) College, Bethel College (North Newton, Kan.), churches and individuals.—*Anna Groff*

Tammy Evans

World Missions Institute prepares workers

Julia Smucker and Bethany Geib, participants in World Missions Institute, enjoy food from an Afghan restaurant provided by the mosque in Harrisburg, Pa. Twenty-one missionary candidates who are headed to assignments in North America, Peru, Chile, Honduras, Cambodia, Burkina Faso, Spain, China, Kenya, Honduras, Central Asia and the Middle East grappled with key mission issues, such as sharing one's faith and understanding different worldviews, during the three-week World Missions Institute sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions and held at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School in June. EMM requires World Missions Institute for all who serve long term. "We want everyone to understand our philosophy of missions," says Mervin Charles, director of Global Ministries for EMM, "to understand the biblical foundations and history of missions [and] be introduced to current mission issues and strategies." —*Eastern Mennonite Missions*

Goshen College films win awards

GOSHEN, Ind.—Two films produced with the help of Goshen College students and faculty won awards at the oldest independent film and video festival in the world.

"Watu Wa Amani: People of Peace" won a Gold Remi, and "Dreaming a New South Africa" won a Silver Remi at the 40th annual WorldFest-Houston International Film & Video Festival in April.

"Watu Wa Amani: People of Peace" was developed from a conference held in Kenya put on by historic peace churches. It shares stories from Africans who have struggled to be peacemakers in situations of violence.

Ed Cundiff, former Goshen communication instructor, produced the films. Cundiff and Patricia McFarlane, associate professor of communication, co-produced "Watu Wa Amani: People of Peace."—*Goshen College*

MCC responds to flooding in South Asia

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is providing aid to people displaced by flooding in Nepal and planning a further response to flooding in Nepal, Bangladesh and India.

Seasonal floods are affecting millions of people in these South Asian countries, destroying homes, spreading waterborne diseases and claiming hundreds of lives.

In Nepal, MCC is providing about $21,000 to the Nepal Christian Relief Services to assist about 1,650 people who have fled the flooding in Nepal's southern plains region. The project will provide food, clothing, blankets, soap, mosquito nets and other necessities.

Leah Bonham Eads

/S-started co-op creates community in Evansville, Ind.

nnonite Voluntary Service participant John Eads (right) and
e Case Vickers work at the River City Food Co-op in
nsville, Ind. "We wanted natural foods without having to
ve two hours, pack three ice coolers and pay $300 to get
m," says Eads. In the process, the new market has become
only a natural foods source but has also helped transform
surrounding neighborhood. With his wife, Leah, Eads is
npleting his third year in Evansville with MVS, a service pro-
m of Mennonite Mission Network. The idea for the co-op
ginated during Eads' first year of service through conversa-
ns and neighborhood listening meetings. He picked up the
ject and decided to use an additional year of MVS to tend
growing experiment.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

In Bangladesh, MCC staff members are meeting with partner organizations to plan a response while flood waters still cover about a third of the country.—*MCC*

Thirty-six students receive MMA scholarships

GOSHEN, Ind.—Mennonite Mutual Aid announced the 36 recipients of the MMA College Scholarship, a program that encourages young people to explore the concept of biblical stewardship while helping them continue forward on their educational journey.

To be considered for the awards, 135 students from across the country submitted essays on holistic stewardship and how it impacts them.

Jessica High of Ephrata (Pa.) Mennonite Church, received the $2,500 Howard Brenneman College Scholarship, named for the retired MMA president who was passionate about holistic stewardship. She attends Eastern Mennonite University.

Three students received $1,500, 10 received $1,000, and 22 received $500 for the 2007-2008 school year.

The recipients come from a range of denominations served by MMA, and many are attending Anabaptist educational institutions.—*MMA*

EMU national leader in energy efficiency

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Eastern Mennonite University was one of the three national leaders in efficient energy use out of 90 colleges and universities surveyed two years ago by the Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers. The association recently released its findings.

Ranked third out of 90 schools, EMU started on the path to energy efficiency in the late 1970s, when one of its science professors spent a year studying the ways the college could cut fuel consumption.

New energy-efficient buildings and an innovative heating and cooling system followed in the 1980s.

"We estimate we have saved between $3 and $4 million over the last 10 years in energy costs, compared with what we would have spent if EMU ranked in the middle of the pack for energy efficiency," says C. Eldon Kurtz, physical plant director. —*Eastern Mennonite University*

Dock students awarded at state science fair

LANSDALE, Pa.—Christopher Dock Mennonite High School freshmen Laura Keppley, Robyn Smith, Christian Allebach and Greg Melanson received first-place awards in the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science State Fair at Penn State University in May.

In addition, Keppley received a perfect 5.0 and was awarded a monetary reward for receiving the Carl F. Oerlein Ph.D. Award in Science that is given to an outstanding high school science student.—*Christopher Dock Mennonite High School*

DOOR celebrations brings churches together

ATLANTA—Members of Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship, Beulah Cathedral, Community Fellowship and East Atlanta Christian Fellowship, partner churches of DOOR (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection) in Atlanta, gathered on July 15 for the "DOOR Atlanta Celebration," an annual ecumenical worship service that crosses racial, economic and denominational lines.

This past year, DOOR, a part of Mennonite Mission Network's Christian Service ministries, hosted 469 participants in Atlanta.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

—compiled by Anna Groff

IN BRIEF

Quakertown Christian School names new principal

Phil Swartley, former vice president of National Penn Insurance, has been named the new principal of Quakertown (Pa.) Christian School. He began his work with the school on June 1. Swartley brings with him 15 years of experience from National Penn Insurance, where he worked most recently. The former business executive will bring experience from the corporate world as well as experience in teaching and development at Plumstead Christian School, Plumsteadville, Pa. Swartley graduated from Eastern Mennonite University with a degree in business education. *—Quakertown Christian School*

LMS phonathon raises $162, 000

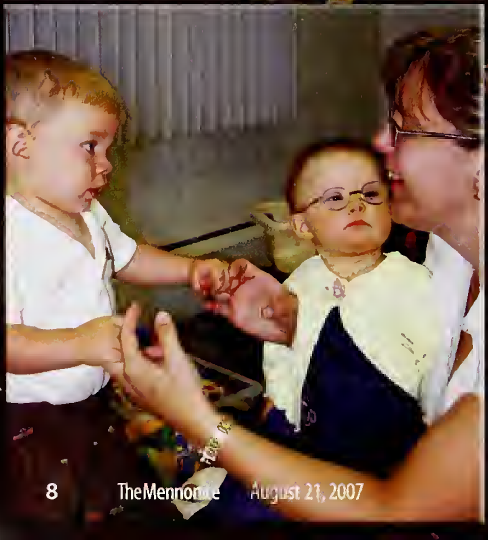
Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School's 2007 alumni phonathon raised $162,000 for the school's annual fund and helped the school balance its operating budget. Approximately $48,000 of the total consisted of challenge fund matching dollars received from alumni, board members and other LMS friends.—*LMS*

Dee Birkey

church or family first?

by Harvey Yoder

Dee Birkey



Dee Birkey

Family first often means parents taking on fewer church responsibilities, taking more family vacations on weekends and rarely joining in congregational activities other than on the Sunday mornings when they are in town.

Every marriage needs the kind of help and support offered by members of a good congregational family.

Which causes more stress—going from being single to married or from being married to having children?

Most parents will agree it is the latter. Much as Alma Jean and I looked forward to having a family, nothing fully prepared us for the demands of bearing and rearing children or for the challenge it created for our marriage. Not that we would want to change anything about having our three, and not that becoming a family made our marriage worse. It simply made it different and more difficult—but ultimately a lot richer and better. We realize that much of what made child rearing so stressful was that this was the one area of our lives where we absolutely did not want to fail.

For most of our parenting years, I was a busy pastor and part-time teacher, and our family lived in a parsonage across from our church. Between the demands of church work and living in our congregation's glass house, we had more than our share of tensions. Even if I hadn't been a pastor, I would have still needed to work at balancing the energy needed for our church family and for our own, given my tendency to become overcommitted and over-involved in things.

Increasingly I hear people resolving this tension with, "We've decided our family comes first," referring to their nuclear family. In practice this often means parents taking on fewer church responsibilities, taking more family vacations on weekends and rarely joining in congregational activities other than on the Sunday mornings when they are in town.

I support the need to set reasonable priorities, but I am concerned whenever church participation gets put further and further down the list of after-school activities, soccer practice, music lessons and a multitude of other events and meetings. Or when increased time vegetating around the family's entertainment center takes precedence over maintaining good connections with friends and fellow church members. Part of the problem, Tom Sine says, is that "the identity of the church and the meaning of community for many have become hopelessly confused with buildings, budgets, programs, personalities and—regrettably—even the self-seeking values of American culture."

Spiritual cousins: Assuming a concept of church as a community of like-minded folks committed to caring for each other, it is shortsighted, I believe, to pit biological family against church family. Why? Because having a people who are our spiritual sisters and brothers and who become spiritual cousins and uncles and aunts and grandparents for our children is more important than ever in our childrearing years. Our marriages are less likely to thrive or even survive if our families aren't being well nurtured.

While ailing marriages and families can often benefit from professional help, all of them need the kind of regular first-aid offered by members of their biological and spiritual families.

While ailing marriages and families can often benefit from professional help, all of them need the kind of regular first-aid offered by members of their biological and spiritual families. In fact, I see a direct correlation between the growing number of marriage breakups and the increased breakdown of this kind of community and extended family support. When couples lack access to wise elders and peers with whom they can share their distresses and from whom they can gain much-needed encouragement and help, even small problems can become overwhelming.

During our minivan years, many of these problems have to do with child rearing itself. Wise couples realize their need for the blessing and support of a whole congregation in order to raise a whole and healthy family. My own parents felt so strongly about this that they made a 1,400-mile move

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

with eight children to become a part of a faith community they believed would have a better influence on us.

Their sacrifice paid off. While the church community they chose may not have offered much in the way of polished worship services, great preaching or eye-catching Sunday school material, it provided something far more important. The congregation offered lots of support in the form of frequent, warm hospitality and time spent working together at harvest and building or quilting projects, all of which were associated with good meals, conversations and storytelling. It was in those settings and from these church-family mentors that I gained many of my values. I still love these good people and cherish their memories.

Positive impact: In rearing our own three children, we are forever indebted to the good church people who invited our family into their hearts and homes, the Algers, Brennemans, Kuykendalls, Lantzes, Millers, Showalters, Souders and many others who loved us, took an interest in our children and made a positive impact on us all. We could not have done it without them.

Yet I see few books and articles on marriage or family life even mentioning a larger context than that of the nuclear family unit of mother, father and 2.3 children, with an occasional visit by doting grandparents. The underlying notion is that parents do this by themselves, and they alone get the credit (or the blame) for how their children turn out.

So how can we work together to help our children grow in their faith and in their commitment to God and the church? Here are some important ways:

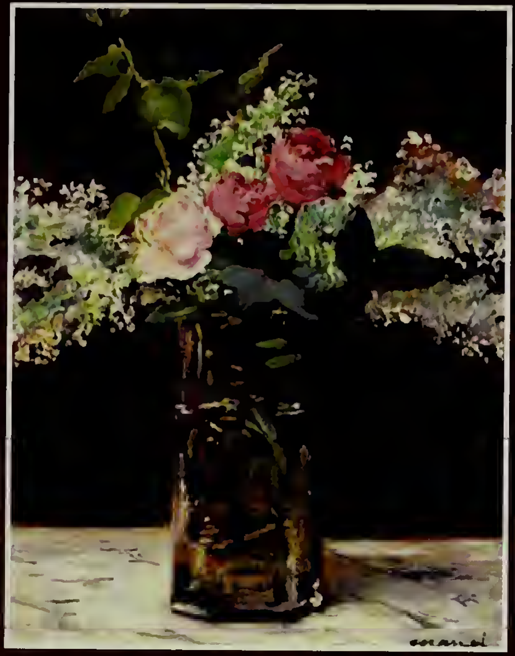
- Both at home and with our church family, we celebrate lots of love, joy, peace and other good Spirit fruit. We realize that as a community we need to demonstrate the same kind of "gleam in the eye" enthusiasm for serving God and the church we want our children to have.
- We cultivate good relationships with others in our congregations by taking time for warm, stress-free connections and conversations with each other and with each other's children.
- As much as possible, we make child-care arrangements with other members of our church family or with other folks who share and reinforce our values.
- We try hard to be in agreement with our spouse (and with other parents in our church as much as possible) in setting reasonable expectations and guidelines for involvement in church and youth group activities—without either compromising our positions or engaging in ongoing power struggles.
- We plan for vacation and other family activities that involve the larger church family, such as service projects, camping experiences and attendance at churchwide conventions that expose our children to as many good people of faith as possible.
- Meanwhile, we reduce, rather than increase, access to the many forms of entertainment available that compete for good family and church time.

In short, we remember we simply can't do all of this on our own. We realize it takes a whole congregation to sustain a good marriage and to raise a whole and healthy family.

Harvey Yoder is a licensed counselor and marital therapist at Family Life Resource Center in Harrisonburg, Va., and serves as pastoral leader of Family of Hope, a Mennonite house church. This article is reprinted from Lasting Marriage: The Owners' Manual. *Copyright © 2007 by Herald Press, Scottdale, PA 15683. All rights reserved. Used by permission.*

Lasting Marriage: The Owners' Manual by Harvey Yoder (Herald Press, 2007, $11.99) uses the analogy of a marriage, like a car, needing regular care and attention. The high divorce rate in our country cries out for such care and attention. Yoder shares his years of experience as a counselor and marital therapist, covering such aspects as the wedding, budgeting, communication and sexual intimacy. Fitting the analogy of maintaining a car, he takes a practical approach and offers many pieces of advice. These are good, yet the detail and tone can be offputting. I imagine many younger readers will not find his approach as understanding of their context as others may. The book uses cartoon illustrations by the late Lee Eshleman to alter this tone, but it's not that effective.

Taking a different approach to marriage is **The Redemption of Love: Rescuing Marriage and Sexuality from the Economics of a Fallen World** by Carrie A. Miles (Brazos Press, 2006, $24.99), which Miles calls "a biblical theology of marriage." Although the book uses biblical exegesis and sociology in addressing marriage, it is nevertheless accessible to most readers. Miles shows how radical Jesus' life and teaching was in his time, as he called people to return to God's intent at creation, that husband and wife become "one flesh" (Matthew 19:5), rather than live according to "the world of thorns," where men exercise power over women. She writes, "Social status, gender and political power were to have no bearing in the Christian community." She shows that, "far from advocating the status quo of patriarchy, Paul, like Jesus, sought to overturn it." Miles goes on to consider love in an age of wealth, Christian marriage and family life in the 21st century, and the Christian family and the limits of politics. She concludes with the Bible's "simple ideal for marriage: a union of two souls that is romantic, poetic and by worldly standards completely impractical." Both books offer needed help for Christians seeking to live faithfully in their marriage relationships in an age of self-centeredness.—*Gordon Houser*



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Manet's *Vase of White Lilacs and Roses*

by Lee Harlan Bahan

Because Manet was dying, sunlight stamped
BEATIFIED across a pale pink rose,
the first of three that nail five lilac sprays,
more like Shiva's arms than Christ's, to a ground

so dark brown it's almost black. The glass
allows this darkness to invade the vase,
which, stained teak, describes a post that light
reflected by submerged foliage has carved.

The shadow cast by this arrangement falls
across a blue-veined marble table top,
briefly to the right. A window was
above, behind, and left of the artist's chair.

Paint dabs on canvas prove and don't
what can't be argued. The vase and flowers
form a cross. If there's no window in
this picture, neither is Manet, nor are you.

You're where the light is. Rising from the froth
of lilacs, one long stem with leaves insists
a bud exists although the canvas stops.

Lee Harlan Bahan lives in Freetown, Ind.

On being a convert

Mennonites view me with reserved optimism.

by Debra Sapp-Yarwood

“Yarwood? That’s not a Mennonite name. Is Sapp Mennonite?”

I tell the inquirer, “No, neither is Mennonite. I’m a convert, actually.”

“Ooooh.” The voice is pleasant but tinged with skepticism.

In normal churches, and by that I mean non-Mennonite, the natives welcome converts exuberantly and often congratulate them on seeing the light. Then they show them to the coffee pot, ask them if they’d like to join a committee and invite them to bring a hot dish to share after next Sunday’s worship. Accepting converts is a natural part of their culture, and they do not question the convert’s motives or resolve.

In Mennonite churches, the natives are often quiet and reserved. They’re hospitable but not effusive. To newcomers, they display the kind of constraint that a family might show when a young man brings home his fianceé for the first time, and the family fears they may scare the young woman off. The subtext is: “We probably want you; we’re not sure. But if you knew us the way we know us, you’d think twice about joining us for better or for worse.”

Native Mennonites wonder whether a newcomer will have the backbone to endure a popular war as a Mennonite.

I don’t think this approach serves the church or God, but I think it is the logical consequence of Mennonites’ culture of humility combined with a complicated, often painful history.

It would be unseemly proud in a Mennonite church to congratulate someone on “seeing the light.” Moreover, seeing the light of this church is not a happy call to live on Easy Street before being fitted for your eternal crown and issued your jewels. It isn’t easy to live Christ’s call to peace and social justice, even for (maybe especially for) those who live on the electrical grid, surf the Internet and otherwise participate “in the world.”

The skepticism and reserve is also rooted in history. These days, with the country engaged in an unpopular war, the “light” of peace this church offers may look like the Aurora Borealis, but native Mennonites wonder whether a newcomer will have the backbone to endure a popular war as a Mennonite. The Kaufmans, Kliewers, Yoders and Zehrs are girded by family stories of withstanding persecution during times of conflict. They may look at me and wonder, If Iran launches a nuclear warhead at the United States, will this neophyte take her place as an Anabaptist social pariah?

I recognize that I cannot appreciate war resistance in my bones and blood like a Goertz or a Goering. My father was in the Army Air Corps during World War II. He sired daughters only, so our family got to take a pass on the war of my era, Vietnam. In addition to lacking a family history of war resistance, I am now too old to matter much to the powers that be. The women’s movement notwithstanding, no one will ever ask this 46-year-old with arthritis in her knees to wield an AK-47 for her country’s honor.

While I may not yet appreciate the difficulty of war resistance, my only child is an 8-year-old boy, and our time may come. I want him to understand that we fail God when, as a people, we use war and other forms of violence to communicate and solve problems. As I see national leaders claim to be Christian and pro-war, pro-torture, pro-violence on many fronts, I want my son to get another message from his religious leaders. I want him to hear Christ’s peace message without apology. I want him to know there is another way. I want him to “see the light” before he is asked to wield an AK-47 or whatever the next generation of horrible weapons may be.

I am a convert and as such I am viewed with reserved optimism. Am I a fair-weather Mennonite, or have I embraced the faith for better and for worse? I suppose we’ll only know in time. In the meantime, I could use a cup of coffee and I make a passable hot dish called “forget-me-not beans and rice.” As for committees, I’ll go hide with my friend named Voth, who also avoids serving on them.

Debra Sapp-Yarwood is a member of Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, Kan.

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

Lessons from Psalm 46

How can we keep from singing?

by Gayle Gerber Koontz

The music of the Psalms has spoken to many over the centuries in the midst of uncertainty, confusion, transition and change. Psalm 46 (a later Zion Psalm) is a hymn that combines song, faith and prayer, and it had a place in public worship.

Psalm 46, like other psalms, refers to the forces of chaos and disorder (often represented by the pounding waters, here also by the shaking of the earth) and reaffirms that Yahweh reigns. This psalm is spoken to those who fear their enemies may attack Jerusalem, the city of God, and asserts that human confidence is grounded in God, whose cosmic rule is known and celebrated in Zion-Jerusalem.

Through the city runs a marvelous river, welling up from subterranean depths. God is in the midst of the river, signifying the psalmist's faith that God is with the people; therefore people may trust that, even when threatened by conflict and catastrophe, divine help will come with the break of dawn.

The psalm praises Yahweh, who reigns over the nations and the cosmos. Disorder in the world seems to challenge the rule of God: economic or military powers out of control, environmental or nuclear catastrophe, disease, untimely deaths, demonically complex bureaucracies, betrayals of trust. The psalmist sings that God the Creator rules over meaningless disorder and chaos. As the poet puts it in Psalm 93: "Mightier than the thunder of great waters, / Mighty on high is Yahweh." The tumult is in vain.

How do the psalmists speak to us? What kind of spiritual guidance do they offer?

"Yield and acknowledge that I am God." As far as we are concerned, we don't know what decisions are best. We may not see clearly into the future. We may get our priorities wrong. We may use the wrong educational or development strategies. We do not fully know what God is doing and what it means for us to be faithful as North American Mennonites now. Don't be anxious, Yahweh says. Yield. Acknowledge that I am God. I am working my purposes out. The direction of your ship is not yours alone to determine. For the wind of my Spirit blows.

"Be still and know" is not a summons to quiet meditation or a momentary spiritual pause. The Hebrew imperative indicates a strong meaning of "desist," "give in" or, "let be"—like, shut up. Cease and desist. Admit God is in ultimate control of human history. In faith we assent, "God the Creator reigns; God's rule stands firm." We do not reign; we cling to the Rock, against which the pounding waters break. As Christians we trust that through Jesus Christ God speaks the divine word "above all earthly powers." Love is lord of heaven and earth. "Be quiet. Acknowledge that I am God." The future is in the hands of the Most High. We do not control the outcome. "Be quiet. Relax. Yield." Gelassenheit.

Come, think of Yahweh's marvels. Look beyond immediate anxieties and preoccupations and, like the psalmist, contemplate the awesome things Yahweh has done. The psalmist thought about God's protecting Zion from military attack. Seen under the aspect of God's rule, nations who suppose their military power is decisive are foolish. Think, the psalmist reminds his people, of what God has done in Israel's history.

Remembering Yahweh's marvels—God's power—throughout biblical and church history can keep our creativity alive; it does not permit us to get into a spiral of discouragement as we face the future. Look, the psalmist reminds us, at where God has transformed and is transforming things.

Continued on page 15

A faith that nothing can subvert God's purposes gives us courage to make judgments and take action when the outcomes of these actions are not crystal clear.

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A new look at Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

The parable of the

by Dave Miller

Once, when I read this parable of Jesus, I remembered a comment I heard in a Sunday school class some years ago. The discussion was about church membership and who should or should not be accepted. "But we have to keep the church pure," someone said. Although it sounded OK, it bothered me, though I couldn't say why. Since then I have come to the conclusion that keeping the church pure is not our responsibility, at least not in the way we normally go about it.

Like most of Jesus' parables, this one deals with the everyday world. In the parable, the farmer sows good seed in his field. While he is unaware, someone who wants to harm him comes and sows weed seeds throughout the field. When the two plants first come up, all look fine, but when the seed heads form, it is obvious there is a problem.

It is commonly believed that the weeds Jesus talked about were a plant that looks similar to wheat when it is young but has a different seed head. Distinguishing the two in early stages of growth was difficult. As soon as the problem becomes apparent, the servants want to get into the field and eliminate the weeds. But the farmer wisely says, No, there is too much risk involved.

The risk the farmer sees is threefold. As the farmer indicates, the first risk is that pulling the weeds likely will also root up some of the wheat. They are closely intermingled in the field, with the roots intertwined below the surface. It is impossible to do what the servants want to do without destroying some of the wheat.

A second risk is that some of the wheat will have been mistakenly pulled out with the weeds. Because of the similarity of the plants, the servants will make mistakes in judging what is weed and what is wheat. Also they are growing so closely together that it will be difficult not to inadvertently grasp a wheat plant along with the weed, even if you correctly identify the weed.

To say we know the mind of God to the extent that we can correctly judge another person's relationship with God is to put God into a box of our construction.

Finally there is the problem of trampling. Have you ever tried walking through a grain field without stepping on the plants? It's virtually impossible in modern fields, which are machine planted in narrow rows. In the fields of Palestine, it would have been impossible because the seed was planted by hand, scattered evenly over the surface. Had the servants gone into the field after the weeds, many wheat plants would have been bruised, bent and stunted, reducing their potential for producing a good crop.

In his explanation of the parable Jesus says the farmer represents God. The enemy who sows the weed seed represents Satan. The harvesters are the angels. The good seed represents the members of God's kingdom. While Jesus does not identify the servants, it is logical to understand them to be Christians in the service of God.

In spite of this interpretation, however, my recollection of the sermons I have heard on this parable is that they focused primarily on the judgment depicted at the conclusion, which describes a fiery end to the weeds. But this is not the main point of the parable. Rather the focus is how we relate to those we perceive as sinners. What do we do when we think we see weeds in our midst? Our first instinct is to get rid of them. Yank them out and consign them to the fire. But Jesus clearly warns against this sort of action. It is, after all, a matter of judgment, and we are not called to be judges.

In my growing up years there was much attention given to "weed pulling" in the church. People were disciplined as "weeds" for a variety of reasons, and some were denied participation because they were judged to be weeds. I wonder if this served any useful purpose. Were we a better congregation for eliminating weeds? I doubt it. We were more homogenous, but that is not necessarily better.

Today, people and entire churches are judged to be weeds by those who sit in judgment. How many tender young "wheat plants" are pulled up, trampled or disturbed to the point that they wither and die or, at best, grow up stunted and twisted. That is a

weeds

sacrifice many seem willing to make. But it does not honor God, even though it's a sacrifice made with the intent of keeping the church pure.

If we are contemplating this sort of action, two important points in the parable should speak to us. First, remember where the weeds came from. Jesus clearly says the source of evil among us is Satan—the sower of the weed seeds. Too often in our misguided efforts at purity we conclude that the source of evil is the people we think are weeds. Consequently we focus our energies and animosity on them, believing we can rid ourselves of evil if we just get rid of certain people.

A second important point is to note who the harvesters are and what their job is. Jesus says that the sorting out of weeds from wheat is a task for angels, not for servants. It seems to me the assumption of this task for ourselves is not only risky but is arrogant. In spite of how confident we are that we understand God's will, if we are honest, we need to admit that we are not as perceptive as the angels of God. To say we know the mind of God to the extent that we can correctly judge another person's relationship with God is to put God into a box of our construction—to use God to support our personal agenda.

Since pulling weeds is not our responsibility, is there anything we can do to keep the church pure?

Yes. There is one area in which we have significant responsibility for the purity of the church, a place where all of us can contribute safely and effectively to church purity: our own lives. This is the only place where we are qualified to look for weeds and pull them out by the roots when we find them. When we open our lives to God, we are competent to recognize the evil within us that has been sown by the enemy while we were asleep or perhaps while we were busy trying to pull weeds elsewhere. Removing those weeds will, more than anything else, promote purity within the church.

Dave Miller is program director of Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen (Ind.) College.

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How can we keep

continued from page 13

Israel's faith is that in spite of current appearances God reigns. That God's rule is coming more fully was transposed into the "good news in Jesus' preaching" (Mark 1:15). God reigns and is creating "a new heaven and a new earth."

A faith that nothing can subvert God's purposes gives us courage to make judgments and take action when the outcomes of these actions are not crystal clear. And remembering God's astounding power as we see it through the lens of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus renews our hope.

We have a much longer past and a broader story than the psalmist had. What astounding things has God done since the second temple period, when Psalm 46 was written? With Israel? With Jesus the Messiah? With the Christian church after the death and resurrection of Jesus? In our Mennonite history?

Appropriating the Psalms: What are the specific changes, elements of disorder or reorder, the potential chaos that presses most urgently on you in your life and work? What is the "sound of the sea," "the roaring of the waters," "the trembling of the mountains" for you? What are the specific marvels God has done that you have witnessed?

The psalmist who wrote Psalm 46 and those who have sung and read and prayed these psalms over the centuries, call us to sing with them. If Love is lord of heaven and earth, how can we keep from singing?

Gayle Gerber Koontz teaches theology and ethics at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

Portland Mennonite Church

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA

Bill Conwell

Colombian pastors Eduardo Bautista an
Martinez (left) with PMC's sister church
Bill Conwell, Gladys Matiz, Ruth Nisly, Li
Sue Glick, Rachel Joy and Lisa Hughes.

Lowell Herr

Pastor Rod Stafford (left) baptizes LaJuan Jecker and Kevin Gallagher in the Pacific Ocean at the all-church retreat in May. With them are their children, Jana and Kelton.

Portland Mennonite Church (PMC) is in the "None Zone." When people in the Pacific Northwest are asked their religious identification, more answer "none" than in any other region of the United States. But the Hawthorne neighborhood of Portland, Ore., where the church meetinghouse is located, is spiritual. Around the corner is a Goddess Gallery that recently expanded into a larger space.

In such a setting, PMC is striving to heed the ancient words of the prophet Jeremiah: "Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf" (29:7). Against the tendencies toward assimilation or isolation, PMC is striving to be a distinctively Christ-shaped community that is actively engaged in the compassion, shalom and justice of the gospel.

On Sunday mornings, 200 people gather for Sunday school and worship. During the week, small groups meet all over the metropolitan area. And every day, members of the congregation—who work at the medical center, teach school, drive public transit buses, run businesses, work in law offices, parent children—strive to make their worship and work one. The congregation also actively supports local ministries, including FISH Emergency Services, Operation Nightwatch (a homeless hospitality ministry) and Sisters of the Road café.

Five years ago, PMC joined a sister church in Anolaima, Colombia. Three delegations of PMC members have since visited Colombia, and last fall the pastors of the Colombian church, Eduardo Bautista and Lucy Martinez, visited Portland. Along with the joy of friendships, that relationship has pushed PMC to advocate for changes in U.S. policy toward Colombia.—*Rod Stafford*

Lowell Herr

Portland Mennonite Church's meet

James Lang, Kelton Gallagher and
war in Iraq.

Amanda Leatherman and Elsa Hoover in the church's Christmas pageant

Lowell Herr

Vada Snider

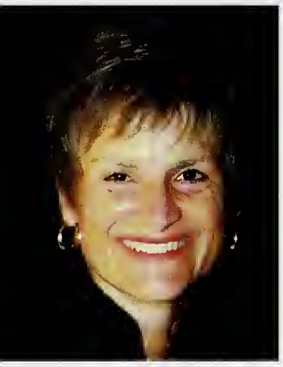
Mike Bauerlein teaches an elementary age Sunday school class.

WAR ISN'T
THE ANSWER
ACT
FOR
PEACE

mbers rally against the

Lowell Herr

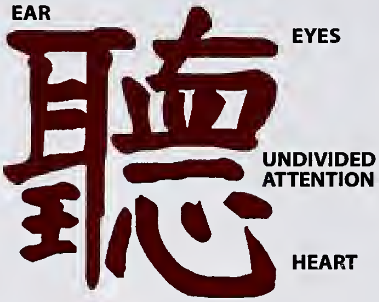
I'm all ears—and eyes and heart



Sharon Waltner is moderator of Mennonite Church USA.

I wear many hats: I'm a mother, a farmer, a health-care consultant and moderator of Mennonite Church USA. As I've learned to balance wearing many hats, I've realized that wearing one hat can help me with the tasks I may encounter while wearing another.

I enjoy my work as a consultant because I get the chance to interact with people from diverse cultural, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. I'm often amused at how frequently my professional circles overlap: my education in health care helps me speak to my work with Mennonite Church USA, and my Mennonite training in conflict transformation is an integral part of my work with health-care institutions. In these fields and in my "real job"—farming with my husband—I continue to be impressed at the importance of listening.



Some years ago I was called into a situation at a health-care facility where the housekeeping staff and their supervisor were at an impasse. The supervisor had clear instructions about where the wet cleaning mops should be placed. The housekeeping staff was vehemently opposed to the prescribed location. "The mops have always gone next to the floor basin when you've finished." "If the mops are left out, they contaminate my work area." The incident seemed petty enough at first, but because of poor listening skills the case of the misplaced mops escalated into a battle of Babylonian proportions. The department manager, the director of nursing and the facility CEO tried and failed to resolve this seemingly simple issue.

In exasperation, the CEO called me to mediate. We sat down, and I asked each participant to share his or her perspective—but not before they summarized the other side's point of view in their own words. Even though I'd read Marshall Rosenberg's *Nonviolent Communication*, which cites research that the time required to reach conflict resolution is cut in half when each negotiator agrees, before responding, to repeat what the previous speaker had said, I was still astonished at how quickly we discovered that the problem had nothing at all to do with who put which mops where. The point of contention was one of respect for and acknowledgment of the other. The housekeeping staff was hurt because the disregard their supervisor exhibited undermined their feelings of self-worth.

At the Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution I met the Chinese character for the verb "to listen" (see below). My initial reaction to the character was the same as my reaction to most Chinese characters: Wow, that's a lot of lines and squiggles. I can't begin to fathom this beautiful complexity and that it actually means something.

As the facilitator unearthed the symbolism of the character, however, I was struck at the pictorial representation of what it means to truly listen. Obviously the ear is an important part of listening, but it is only one component. The eye, heart and undivided, undistracted attention all combine to make up not only the substance of the Chinese character but the very essence of this full-contact sport of listening.

Listening is hard work. It's an endangered species in contemporary society, especially in our courtrooms and debates. Each side tries to make its point and hears the other side's point only long enough to tear it down. Since attorneys and debaters rarely have to reach agreement or collaborate, it doesn't matter how much ill will their "communication" generates.

Human nature is fragile. We crave to be heard, acknowledged and understood. The housekeeping staff and its supervisor cared little about where the mops called home but vociferously wanted to be acknowledged. Until each side engaged the ear, eye, heart and a sense of compassion, communication, true listening, stalemated.

I learned a lot that day. I learned that the art of listening takes practice. It's exhausting. It comes more naturally for some than others. It is of singular importance for true communication, especially in Mennonite Church USA. I didn't know I could learn so much from a bunch of squiggles and some dirty, wet mops. But I pray what I learned will help me pay attention to the whole of Mennonite Church USA as we move forward together, listening not only to each other but to God's call to follow Jesus.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **A modest proposal for Communion**—Marlene Kropf
- **Table of transformation**—Pat Shaver

Bridgefolk gathering discusses identity

More than 115 Catholics and Mennonites gather for sixth annual meeting.

Mary E. Klassen

Mary Lehman Yoder, pastor at Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., talks with Guadalupe Zepeda during the 2007 Bridgefolk gathering.

More than 115 peace-minded Catholics and sacramentally minded Mennonites came to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., July 26-29 for the sixth annual Bridgefolk gathering.

Participants from as far away as Nova Scotia and Hawaii listened to presentations on baptism and identity, took part in service projects and tours and discussed the conference's theme, "Who Do We Think We Are? Catholics and Mennonites Growing Together in Christ."

"This is the main event I look forward to each year," says Margaret Pfeil, an assistant professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame and a member of the St. Peter Claver Catholic Worker community in South Bend, Ind.

Bridgefolk is a grassroots group that seeks "to make Anabaptist-Mennonite practices of discipleship, peaceableness and lay participation more accessible to Roman Catholics and to bring the spiritual, liturgical and sacramental practices of the Catholic tradition to Anabaptists."

Local Mennonite-Catholic groups have sprouted in a handful of locations, including Minneapolis/St. Paul, Winnipeg, Northern Indiana, Newton, Kan., and Wooster, Ohio. Many have used the resource "Called Together to be Peacemakers," an abridged version of the report by the International Mennonite-Catholic Ecumenical Dialogue that wrapped up in 2003.

"The best way to start a group is just to start," says Gerald Schlabach, Bridgefolk's executive director. "There's no one model; the diversity among the groups indicates the wisdom and effectiveness of proceeding in friendship."

In his presentation on the connection between one's baptismal commitment and citizenship, André Gingerich Stoner, director of Interchurch Relations for Mennonite Church USA and pastor of missions at Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend, says that through baptism "our primary identity is with Christ, and we are linked to a global Body of Christ. What it means to really be linked to brothers and sisters across the globe is something we must consistently wrestle with."

Thomas Finger, a Mennonite theologian from Evanston, Ill., says that in a time when governments refuse to talk with each other, "our efforts for dialogue are more crucial than ever."

Finger mentioned that a Mennonite World Conference delegation would return to the Vatican in October for follow-up on the Mennonite-Catholic work.

Other conferences discussing the "Called Together" document are happening this year in Colombia and Germany.

"We are increasingly aware that we're part of a larger body of Christ," says J. Ron Byler, associate executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

Byler has called Bridgefolk a model for interchurch dialogue and cited the recent decision for Mennonite Church USA to join Christian Churches Together in the USA.

Barbara Berger of Sacramento, Calif., says that spending time with Mennonites has given her a global perspective.

"These people have been places. When you listen to them, you feel like you really know what's happening on the ground in Bangladesh or Nicaragua or Iran. It's discipleship in action."

But she says the dialogue reminds Berger of what she loves about her own Catholic faith, including the deep sense of mystery that's conveyed in the Mass.

"Since many of the early Anabaptist reformers were Catholic clergy, our task is one of recovering what we lost, not simply learning something new," says George Dupuy, pastor of Big Spring Mennonite Church in Luray, Va. "We relearn the beauty of mystery and holiness in liturgy from the Mass, and the gift of contemplation and silence from the mystics."

Since many of the early Anabaptist reformers were Catholic clergy, our task is one of recovering what we lost, not simply learning something new.
—George Dupuy

Social justice activities first put Patrick O'Bryan in touch with Mennonites in Ohio.

"We weren't looking for these relationships. We were just drawn to each other," says O'Bryan, who works for the Diocese of Cleveland.

Bridgefolk's next gathering is set for July 2008 at St. John's Abbey in Minnesota.—*Heather Gary of Bridgefolk*

Award of $24,000 aids entrepreneur

Goshen College student demonstrated social entrepreneurship at young age.

Photo provided

A pony-powered environmental lawn-mowing service established Kathryn Birky as a socially conscious entrepreneur when she was only 12 years old.

A pony-powered environmental lawn-mowing service established Kathryn Birky as a socially conscious entrepreneur when she was only 12. And this year, the business plan for the service helped the Goshen (Ind.) College sophomore win a $24,000 young entrepreneur scholarship.

The award, given annually by the National Association for the Self- Employed (NASE), is a national prize for a student who shows interest and promise in entrepreneurship.

Birky, a communication major from Glenn, Mich., demonstrated both aptitudes when she and her brother began researching environmentally friendly ways to mow the lawn six years ago. They decided to try a horse-powered reel mower, a type of nonmotorized mower normally sold to the Amish.

"We enthusiastically purchased a pony named Clementine, built a barn and took driving lessons," Birky wrote in the essay describing her business plan for the scholarship competition.

After advertising the service with flyers explaining the advantages to mowing without using gasoline, Birky says, "we accepted as many lawns as Clementine could handle." They have kept the business going every summer since.

Entrepreneurship is often thought of as a way to be self-sufficient, but for Birky the value goes far beyond that.

"I'm personally more interested in social entrepreneurship, which is what activists do to try to create social change," she says. "I think social entrepreneurs aren't doing it for the money or for their local community; they're doing it to improve their society in the bigger picture."

Her success at raising social awareness while launching a business became apparent in its first year and continued.

"When I began mowing lawns with a pony, I was simply attempting to respect the earth with my decisions. Since then, I have seen it grow in ways I never imagined," she wrote in her essay for the scholarship.

Soon their small but unique business operation was receiving national attention with stories in the *Detroit Free Press* and the *Boston Globe*. Then a Canadian author mentioned the business in her book, and Birky and her brother met the governor of Michigan. For Birky, it was especially rewarding that the attention influenced others to seek alternatives to gas-powered mowers.

After their first summer, they were selected to represent the United States at the United Nations International Children's Conference on the Environment, which led to leadership opportunities at other U.N. conferences and to meetings with corporate and political leaders.

Though she doesn't plan to continue the mowing business, her values haven't shifted. She hopes to be an independent environmental writer.

"If I can convince individual readers to make their everyday decisions with this awareness in mind, their united actions will create a greener world and a brighter future," she says.

She is already on her way to achieving this, having won the scholarship. Anyone across the nation who is a child of an NASE member can apply for the award. Both of Birky's parents are members of the organization as clinical social workers with private practices.

Birky's current entrepreneurial endeavor holds potential for her continued success. She is working with a publisher on her first book, called *Friendship with Horses*, information for teens about training horses.—*Kelli Yoder for Goshen College*

Correction: Adam Stutzman from Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla., was misidentified as Gabriel Brunk of Harrisonburg, Va., in the July 24 issue.

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MVSer joins journey from life to death

Tiffani Boerio received gifts from residents at the Joseph's House community.

When Tiffani Boerio and Teresa Batch met, they knew the time they had to develop a friendship was limited. Batch had terminal cancer. Boerio was there to hold her hand in the final days.

The journey from life into death can be an uncertain and frightening time. At Joseph's House in Washington, an AIDS and cancer hospice for formerly homeless people, death is viewed as a sacred journey. Boerio, a Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) participant whose term recently ended, provided companionship and physical care for the residents who are a part of this community.

Instead of dying alone in a street or hospital bed, each person's final days are spent in a comfortable home surrounded by prayers, hymns and, most importantly, love.

"A lot of people think my work would be rather depressing," Boerio says. "Sometimes it's sad but not really depressing—it's beautiful actually."

"This morning, the first words that came out of my mouth [were], 'Hi, sunshine. Praise the Lord for you,'" Batch said about Boerio in an interview with PBS just days before her death. (The documentary aired in 2006).

Mark Wasser

Tiffani Boerio (left) talks with a resident of Joseph's House.

Boerio was a professional librarian for eight years before joining MVS because, she says, she needed to take a break. Her residents have awakened a part of her missing for some time.

In offering unhurried love, Boerio has received gifts in return from her friends from the house.

Boerio has moved to Texas while she studies to become a registered nurse. She plans to work in a hospice or HIV/AIDS setting, to concentrate on poverty medicine or to serve overseas.—*Mark Wasser for Mennonite Mission Network*

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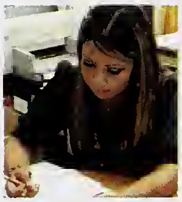
MCCer knows migrant families' needs

Summer service worker helps undocumented workers in central California.



Claudia Jiménez

When Claudia Jiménez meets immigrant families at West Coast Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)'s office, she remembers her own experience of becoming a legal resident of the United States.

"I know what they're going through; I know how they feel and I let them know that," says Jiménez, an MCC Summer Service Worker who helps undocumented workers, often families from Latin America, to apply for legal U.S. status.

Jiménez, a social work major at Reedley (Calif.) College, acts as a liaison between the families and legal representatives.

Jiménez was born in Mexico and moved with her parents to Fowler, Calif., when she was 6.

When she was 8, she and her mother had to return to Mexico to fulfill the U.S. immigration requirements. To do so meant separation from her father, who moved back and forth between the two countries every six months to provide support for his family.

Jiménez and her mother remained in Mexico until they received their permanent residency cards three years later.

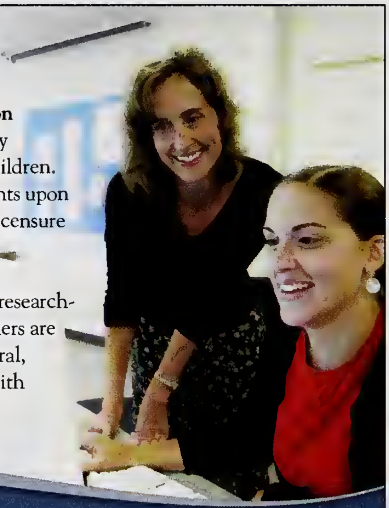
Jiménez heard about the help provided by MCC through her aunt, who came for assistance with her documentation.

She recently sought the office's help to apply for citizenship and learned about the Summer Service program. Now a U.S. citizen, Jiménez reaches out to other immigrant families.

The MCC office is located in Reedley, a town where over half the population consists of Spanish-speaking people.

The immigration program's primary focus is to assist those within the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ communities in central California.

"God plays a big role in here," says Jiménez.
—*Julie DeLuca for Mennonite Central Committee*



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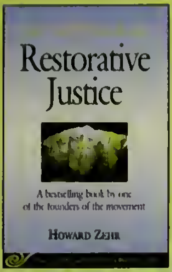
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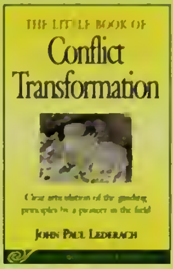
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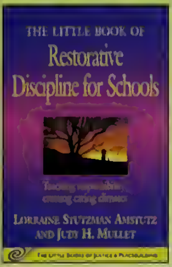
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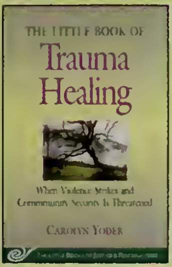
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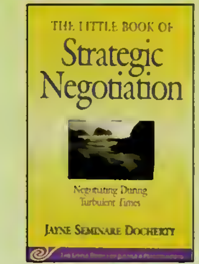
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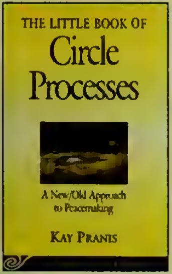
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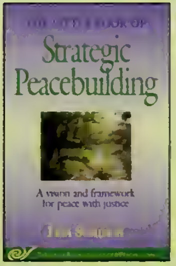
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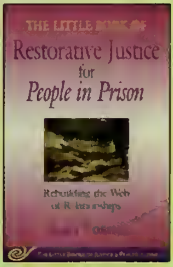
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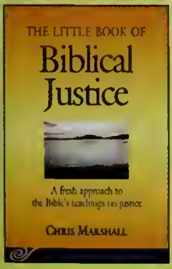
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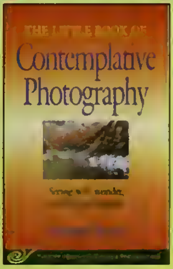
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Turpin Mennonite Church will celebrate ***100 years of worship and fellowship*** at its location three miles north, four miles east and one mile north of Turpin, Okla., on Sept. 1 and 2. For additional information contact the church at 580-259-6440 or visit their Web site at www.turpinmennonitechurch.com.

The annual ***Harvest Day*** at **CrossRoads** off Garbers Church Rd., Harrisonburg, Va., Sept. 29.

WORKERS

Deal, Michael, ended a term as lead pastor at Agape Fellowship, Williamsport, Pa., June 30.

Gonsman, Elsie, was ordained as pastor at Roaring Spring Mennonite Church, Roaring Spring, Pa., on July 15.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Allison, Liam Jacob, June 15, to Clay and Lisa Birky Allison, Colorado Springs, Colo.

Beery, Grady Michael, Aug. 1, to Jeff and Michelle Wolgamott Beery, Creston, Ohio.

Brant, Jacqueline Marie, June 21, to Jonathan and Heather Brown Brant, Springs, Pa.

Coblentz, Adella Rae, July 29, to Zach and Sarah Bowers Coblentz, Hartville, Ohio.

Durso, Ava Rose, July 10, to Tony and Kristi Schultz Durso, Westfield, Ind.

Easton, Nolan Harris, June 26, to David and Melissa Easton, Salisbury, Pa.

Fink, Alexandra Ann, July 7, to Laura Fink, Elkhart, Ind.

Lambert, Ryan Richard, June 11, to Thomas and Jennifer Hoover Lambert, Mohnton, Pa.

Lehman, Alisha Nicole, July 6, to Howard and Marlene Bontrager Lehman, Syracuse, Ind.

Martin, Zachary Paul, July 19, to Kevin and Tonia Stutzman Martin, Weatherford, Okla.

Mathew, Grantham Christopher, July 22, to Josh and Laura Hoover Mathew, Middlebury, Ind.

Miller, Ryan Lee, July 31, to Owen and Ada Mae Coblentz Miller, Millersburg, Ohio.

Nolt, Caleb Milton, July 31, to Jeffrey and Ellyn Trout Nolt, Lancaster, Pa.

Reinhardt, Brayden Randall, July 20, to Jeff Johnson and Stephanie Reinhardt, Elkhart, Ind.

Rheinheimer, Katherine Janae, July 22, to Ben and Julie Brandenberger Rheinheimer, Goshen, Ind.

Riegsecker, Macey Kay, July 23, to Jason and Erika McSorley Riegsecker, Bristol, Ind.

Schultz, Kingston John, May 28, Christopher and Sheila Tabilon Schultz, Napa, Calif.

Sweet, Dominic Lee, May 1, to Randy Sweet and Jessica Laughlin, LaGrange, Ind.

Trost, Samantha Jane, Aug. 1, to Benjamin and Lori Armentrout Trost, McGaheysville, Va.

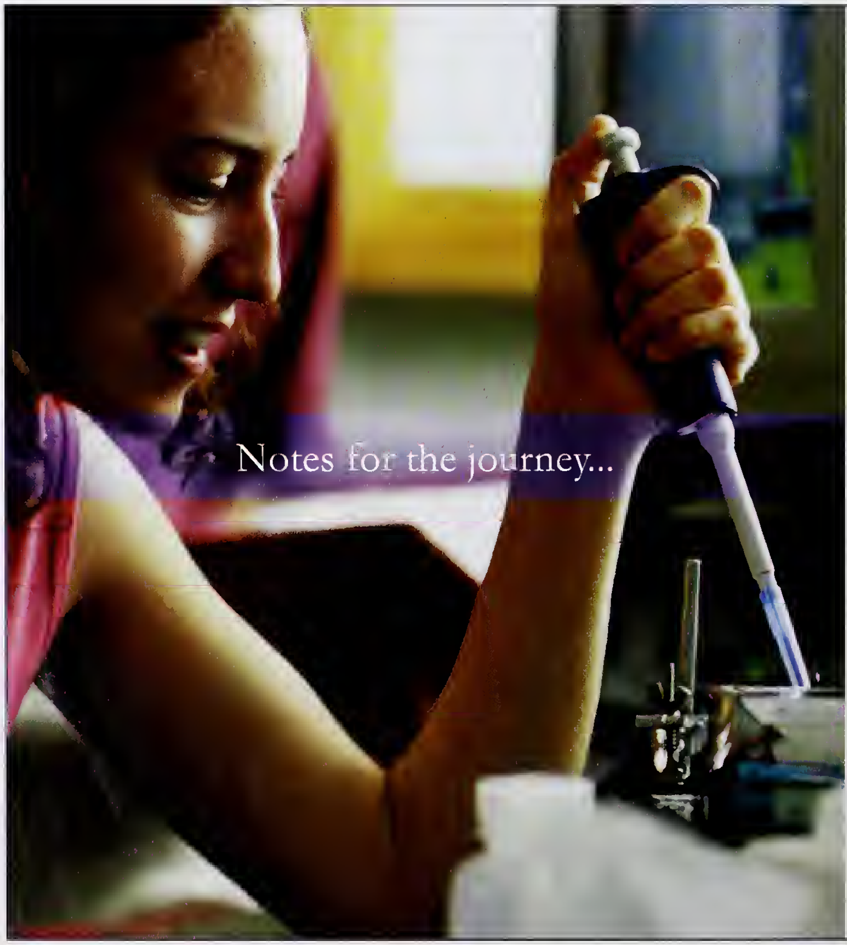
Yutzy, Joseph Adrian, May 28, to Jay and Rebecca Edlind Yutzy, Harrisonburg, Va.

Zoller, Hamish Caelech, Aug. 4, to Jeremy and Rachel Nelson Zoller, Colorado Springs, Colo.

MARRIAGES

Abrahams/Graber: Krista Abrahams, Goessel, Kan., and Nathan Graber, Moundridge, Kan., July 21, at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Benfield/Lauf: Melisa Benfield, Perkasie, Pa., and Ian Lauf, July 28, at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church pavilion, Blooming Glen, Pa.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Brookes/Gaff: Jeff Brookes and Brooke Gaff, Valparaiso, Ind., July 21, at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts, Ind.

Buckwalter/Fairfield: Molly Buckwalter, Keezletown, Va., and Andrew Fairfield, Bridgewater, Va., July 21, at the bride's home near Keezletown.

Burch/Martin: Sara Burch, El Dorado, Kan., and Dustin Martin, Madison, Kan., July 14, at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

Costello/Martin: Darlene Costello, Elmira, Ontario, and Leroy Martin, Elmira, July 7, at Floradale Mennonite Church, Elmira.

Derstine/Nyce: Angela Derstine, Souderton, Pa., and Jordan Nyce, Telford, Pa., July 22, at Franconia Mennonite Church, Telford, Pa.

Feasby/Lederach: Cassady Feasby, Convoy, Ohio, and Sara Lederach, Goshen, Ind., June 19, at Marathon Village, Nashville, Tenn.

Froelicher/MacMaster: Britta Froelicher, Gainesville, Fla., and Tom MacMaster, Canton, Solothurn, Switzerland, July 21, at the Mieschegg (Froelicher family farm) in the high Jura, Canton, Solothurn.

Gatewood/Lehman: Jane Gatewood, Fredericksburg, Va., and Larry Lehman, Fredericksburg, June 23, at Joshua Wilton House.

Gingrich/Shenk: Jonelle Gingrich, Lancaster, Pa., and Elvin Shenk, Lancaster, July 8, at Landisville Mennonite Church, Landisville, Pa.

Hansen/Yoder: Janet Hansen, Iowa City, Iowa, and Charles Yoder, Iowa City, July 21, in Kalona, Iowa.

Himler/Miller: Rachel Himler, North Canton, Ohio, and Christopher Miller, North Canton, July 13, at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartville, Ohio.

Houser/Metcalf: Joy Houser, Phoenix, Ariz., and Ben Metcalf, Dalton, Ohio, June 23, at Goshen College Reith Recital Hall, Goshen, Ind.

Jess/Nofziger: Manda Jess, Green Springs, Ohio, and Jason Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio, Aug. 4, at Grace Lutheran, Fremont, Ohio.

Kopina/Rhodes: John Kopina, Jr., Prairie Village, Kan., and Christina Rhodes, Olathe, Kan., April 21, at Ashbury United Methodist Church, Prairie Village, Kan.

Longacre/Wint: Virginia Longacre, Quakertown, Pa., and Kristopher Wint, Pennsburg, Pa., June 16, at Franconia Mennonite Church, Franconia, Pa.

Marich/Schlabach: Jennifer Marich, Akron, Ohio, and Eric Schlabach, Hartville, Ohio, July 14, at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartville.

Mishler/Owolabi: Erica Mishler, Sugarcreek, Ohio, and Daniel Owolabi, Kidron, Ohio, Aug. 4, at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church, Walnut Creek, Ohio.

Shantz/Teichrob: Heather Shantz, St. Jacobs, Ontario, and Nicolas Teichrob, Chilliwack, British Columbia, July 21, in Mission, British Columbia.

Shelly/Sommers: Mark Shelly, Uniontown, Ohio, and Amy Sommers, Hartville, Ohio, July 6, Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartville.

Thomas/Varner: Nikale "Nikki" Thomas, Hollsopple, Pa., and Jason Varner, Hollsopple, July 29, Kaufman Mennonite Church, Davidsville, Pa.

Wissing/Yoder: Justin Wissing, Fort Wayne, Ind., and Erin Rosanne Yoder, Middlebury, Ind., July 28, at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

DEATHS

Brubacher, Edward "E.J." James, 89, North Newton, Kan., died Aug. 1. Spouse: Lucille Marie Moore Brubacher (deceased). Parents: August John and Clara Mae Hirschler Brubacher. Children: Edward James Jr. "Jim," Wade, Michael; nine grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 6 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

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Clemens, Mildred "Mim" Landes, 91, Lansdale, Pa., died Aug. 3. Spouse: Jacob E. Clemens (deceased). Parents: Samuel Y. and Emma Norma Walters Landes. Children: Robert L., Thomas L., Timothy L., Mary Ann Hagey; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 7 at Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield, Pa.

Egli, Glenn Herbert, 72, Mesa, Ariz., died July 10. Spouse: Ardis Goehring Egli. Parents: John B. and Rosie Good Egli. Children: Jeffrey, Cheryl Roth, Linda Kym, Ann Kaiser; 12 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 14 at Hopedale Mennonite Church, Hopedale, Ill.

Graber, Elma Ruth Smith, 83, Moundridge, Kan., died July 21. Spouse: Erwen Wenger Graber. Parents: Max and Effie Unruh Smith Graber. Children: Pamela Wilson, Suzette Kakar, Susan Hijikata, Joel; eight grandchildren. Funeral: July 27 at First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge.

Habegger, Evelyn Johanna Reiger, 92, Moundridge, Kan., died July 23. Spouse: Loris Aldo Habegger. Parents: John F. and Kate Gerbrand Regier. Children: Arman, Richard, Lorna Harder; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 3 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Headings, Sanford David, 85, West Liberty, Ohio, Aug. 7 of a heart attack. Spouse: Ruth Brenneman Headings. Parents: Milton and Lela Kanagy Headings. Children: Nancy Horst, Virginia Speicher, Janet Schlabach, Wayne, Roger; 13 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 11 at Bethel Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Hertzler, Norman Lloyd, 83, Mechanicsburg, Pa., died June 18 of renal failure. Spouse: Ruth Stoner Harnish Hertzler. Parents: Owen Amos and Alta Burkart Rohrer Hertzler. Children: Duane, Dale, Dean, Julia, Jeanette; nine grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 22 at Slate Hill Mennonite Church, Mechanicsburg.

Hunsberger, Lois Eileen Dowty, 67, Goshen, Ind., died July 26. Spouse: Rodger M. Hunsberger. Parents: Virgil Vernon and Mary Elizabeth Bloss Dowty. Children: Laurie Hines, Suzette Pletcher, Dennis J. Weldy, Douglas Weldy, Chad Weldy; 12 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 30 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Kautz, Bernard B., Jr., 85, Lancaster, Pa., died June 8. Spouse: Verna Newswanger Kautz. Spouse: Verna Wenger Kautz (deceased). Parents: Bernard B. Laura Lefever Kautz. Children: Delbert L., Gordon L., Daryl L.; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: June 14 at Hernley Mennonite Church, Manheim, Pa.

Kennel, Rhoda Charles, 70, Mountville, Pa., died June 30 of lung cancer. Parents: Elmer F. and Edith Charles Kennel. Funeral: July 3 at Habecker Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Knight, Kara Lorraine Murphy, 74, Bellefontaine, Ohio, died July 26 of cancer. Spouse: Perry Vincent Knight (deceased). Parents: Charles E. and Live M. Nawman Murphy. Funeral: July 31 at Bethel Mennonite Church, West Liberty, Ohio.

Kopp, Ruth K. Becker, 86, Lancaster, Pa., died July 23 following a brief illness. Spouse: Harold R. Kopp (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Anna Kreider Becker. Children: Barry Lee Peters, Daniel G. Peters; three grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 27 at East Petersburg Mennonite Church, East Petersburg, Pa.

Kratz, Minnie Nyce, 89, Souderton, Pa., died July 30. Spouse: Abram L. Kratz (deceased). Parents: Henry and Mabel Moyer Nyce. Children: Curtis, Abram, Jr., Esther Kolb, David Derstine; 17 grandchildren; 44 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 2 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel.

Lehman, Kenneth H. E., 87, West Liberty, Ohio, died Aug. 6. Spouse: Betty Plank Lehman. Parents: Joel and Martha Basinger Lehman. Children: Tom, Ken, Sam, Ed, Tim, Ric, Carol Troyer, Debra Lehman; 25 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 9 at Bethel Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Leatherman, Orpha, 95, Souderton, Pa., died July 1. Parents: Jacob and Laura Kratz Leatherman. Funeral: July 11 at Souderton Mennonite Home.

Martin, Lizzie Mae Weaver-Sauder, 94, Lititz, Pa., died July 22. Spouse: Luke Z. Martin (deceased). Parents: Jonas A. and Lizzie M. Nolt Weaver. Children: William Martin, Harold Martin, John Martin, Eleanor Good, Janet Burkholder, Betty Hurst, Wanda Shirk; 20 grandchildren; 41 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 26 at Ephrata Mennonite Church, Ephrata, Pa.

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Martin, Samuel H., 85, New Holland, Pa., died June 28. Spouse: Sara M. Ziemer Martin. Parents: Mahlon W. and Elsie V. Harnish Martin. Child: Miriam L. Martin; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 2 at Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Maust, Robert Dale, 60, Fort Hill, Pa., died July 7 in an ATV accident. Parents: John E. and Viola Tressler Maust. Funeral: July 12 at Springs Mennonite Church, Springs, Pa.

Meyers, Nona Brenneman, 82, Grantsville, Md., died July 3. Spouse: Daniel Olin Meyers (deceased). Parents: Dennis and Mary Oester Brenneman. Children: Daniel Charles, Wanda J. Yoder; three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 7 at Newman Funeral Home, Grantsville.

Millslagle, Charlotte M. Seighman, 87, Scottdale, Pa., died July 31. Spouse: Everett K. Millslagle (deceased). Parents: George and Mary Baker Seighman. Child: Larry R; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 3 at Scottdale Mennonite Church.

Owolabi, Timothy Aladipo, 58, Dalton, Ohio, died July 8. Spouse: Sheila Oke Abiodun Owolabi. Parents: Samuel and Alice Owolabi. Children: Daniel, Samuel, Elizabeth Owolabi. Funeral: July 14 at Orrville Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio.

Reimer, Emile Jane Klassen, 84, North Newton, Kan., died July 31. Spouse: Eldon Reimer (deceased). Parents: Dan and Emma Schroeder Klassen. Children: Denise Yoder, Brenda Foster, Susan Flickner; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 4 at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Ruth, Mildred Moyer, 95, Sellersville, Pa., died July 26. Spouse: Norman S. Ruth (deceased). Parents: Calvin D. and Mamie B. Moyer. Children: Janice R. Gross, Nancy Moyer; one grandchild; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 30 at Rockhill Mennonite Community Chapel, Sellersville.

Stoltzfus, Aaron, 88, Glendale, Ariz., died June 12. Spouse: Ruth Stoltzfus. Parents: Joel F. and Rebecca Stoltzfus Stoltzfus. Children: Richard, Barbara Ropp, Sharon Sorenson, Randy; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 14 at Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, Phoenix, Ariz.

Thomas, Dorothy M. Erb, 97, Landisville, Pa., died July 26. Spouse: Martin B. Thomas (deceased). Children: Marianne Grove, Nancy Hess, Lois Showalter, Barbara Jean Landis, J. Robert; nine grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 29 at Landis Homes, Lititz, Pa.

Voth, Alfred Harry, 88, Hesston, Kan., died July 26. Spouse: Rosella Pearl Funk Voth. Parents: Henry F. and Elizabeth Schmidt Voth. Children: Diana Hull, Richard, Kenneth, Dennis, Gerald; nine grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 30 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Yoder, Edwin R., 81, Springs, Pa., died May 30. Spouse: Rosella Rounder Yoder. Spouse: Fern Ash Yoder (deceased). Parents: Allen E. and Elizabeth Tice Yoder. Children: Phyllis Furr, Kenneth Yoder; five grandchildren. Funeral: June 2 at Springs Mennonite Church.

Zook, Merle Kenneth, 79, Lakewood, Colo., died July 22 of a heart attack. Spouse: Grace Wenger Zook (deceased). Parents: Uriel and Kathryn Durr Zook. Children: Ken, Barb Swartzendruber, Rose Barber, Les Gustafson-Zook; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 25 at Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood.

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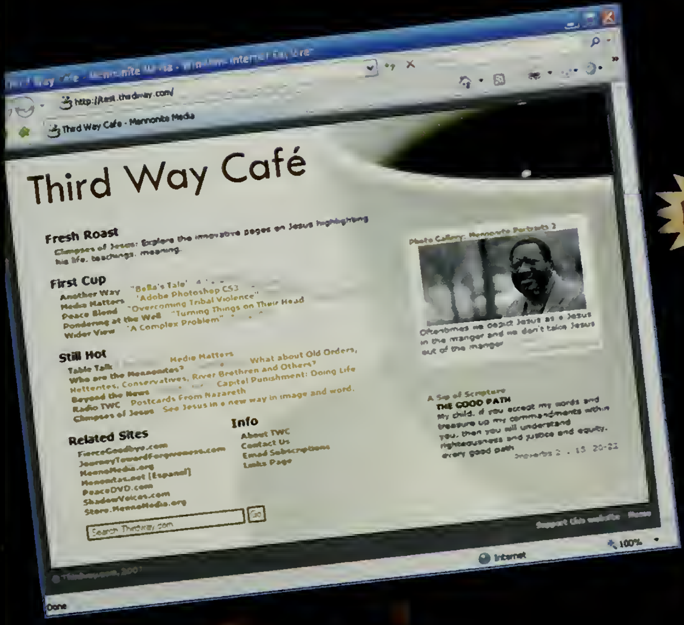

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Mennonite Central Committee seeks applications for the following two positions:

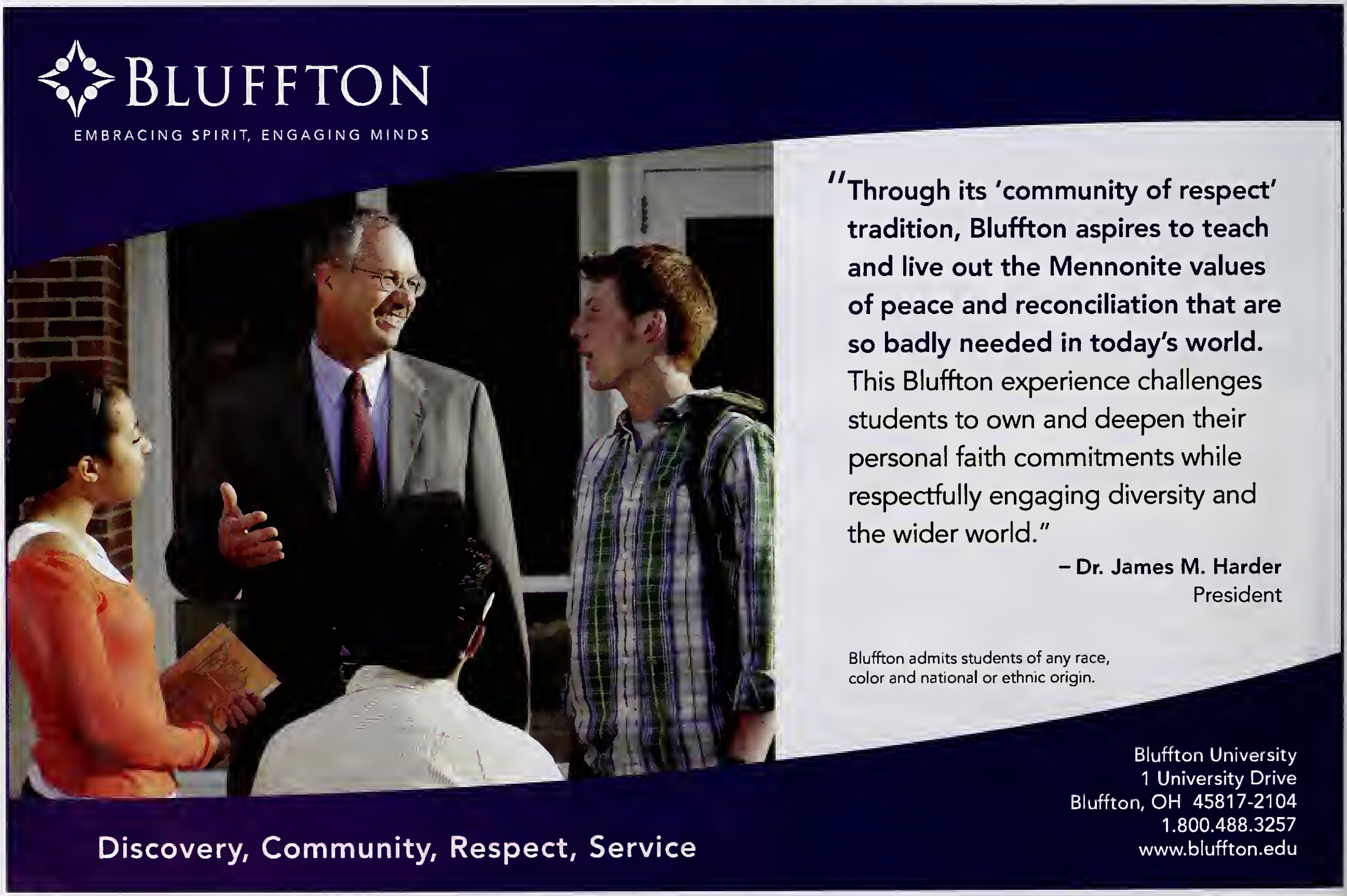
Director of communications. This position carries key responsibility for the external and internal communications for MCC, particularly for MCC international programs and U.S. domestic programs. The director leads a 13-member department that carries out much of the communications function of MCC, including writing, audiovisual production, photography, graphic design and publicity. A bachelor's degree in communications, journalism or a related field is required. An advanced degree in a relevant field is preferred. Cross-cultural or international experience strongly preferred. Knowledge of MCC or MCC's Mennonite and Brethren in Christ constituency is preferred.

Associate director in human resources. This person develops MCC policies and policy revisions, oversees administration of MCC compensation and benefits work and ensures that HR procedures and processes are carried out in an effective, efficient, timely way. This person assists the human resources director in dealing with personnel crises and other departmental tasks. Requirements include three to five years experience working with compensation and benefits; demonstrated knowledge of employment law within the United States; excellent written and oral communication skills; demonstrated ability to make decisions when supervisor is absent; demonstrated ability to manage multiple tasks involving details and the ability to keep personnel information confidential.

Candidates of a gender or ethnic group typically underrepresented in this type of MCC assignment are encouraged to apply. Contact Kathy Jackson at krj@mcc.org or call 717-859-1151 for job description and further information.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a ***full-time financial aid counselor and administrative assistant*** to the enrollment office. This person will award and process institutional and federal financial aid for students, maintain accurate records and determine formulae for aid within the budget, and support the work of the enrollment office. Qualifications include background in higher education financial aid or accounting, proficiency in working with higher education databases, excellent organization and communication skills, acquaintance with the Mennonite church and support of the mission and values of AMBS. For more information, visit www.ambs.edu/employment. To apply, send letter of application, resumé and three references by Aug. 31 to Bob Rosa, director of enrollment services, brosa@ambs.edu; 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517.

First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana (Ill.) seeks a ***lead pastor*** to work with a part-time associate pastor for their congregation of 185. Founded in 1964 and located in a university city, FMC's diverse congregation supports a common vision of seeking to be faithful to God's leading—locally and in the broader world. Our diversity includes participants from different Christian denominations, racial and ethnic groups, rural and urban settings, and varied educational backgrounds. We are a dynamic church with membership in both the Illinois and Central District conferences and participate in various international missions, including Mennonite World Conference. For more information about FMC, visit www.prairienet.org/mennonite. The position pays 100 percent of the salary recommended by Mennonite Church USA. Applications will be reviewed as received. We are actively seeking pastoral leadership. Interested candidates should send initial inquiries to Trudy Good, chair of the pastor search committee, via email at tgood@soltec.net.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Family business adviser for growing family business consulting firm located in Southeast Pennsylvania., passionately committed to helping businesses build lasting legacies; seeking adviser with exceptional interpersonal communication skills and consulting experience. Graduate degree in business and/or behavioral sciences. Please send resumé to Henry D. Landes, President, **Delaware Valley Family Business Center**, 340 N. Main St., Telford, PA 18969, www.dvfbc.com.

Atlantic Coast Conference of Mennonite Church USA is seeking an ***administrator***. This person will provide administrative leadership for the conference and serve as a conference minister for several congregations. This person should be committed to Christ-centered leadership from an Anabaptist understanding, have strong relational, communication and organizational skills, and the ability to lead within a team. Experience in varied cultural settings and the ability to communicate in Spanish is valued.

Atlantic Coast Conference is an association of 33 congregations and several agencies and encourages women and people from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups to apply for the position. The position is at least half-time and may be full-time. For more information, contact Dick Thomas, moderator elect, at thomasjr@lancastermennonite.org or 717-299-0436 ext. 301.

Dr. John Stahl-Wert is keynote speaker at Spruce Lake Retreat's ***Leadership Training Event*** Oct. 10-12, 2007: "Harness raw potential for extraordinary results." Call 800-822-7505, www.sprucelake.org.

MCC Thrift Shop Network—Souderton Care and Shoppes, Southeastern Pennsylvania. One of the largest MCC thrift shops in the United States, we are seeking a ***full-time executive director*** to supervise the operations of four separate stores: clothing, variety, furniture, Ten Thousand Villages. Position includes the management of a 23,000 sq. ft. facility, five full-time managers, five full-time assistant managers, three part-time administrative people and 10 part-time assistant managers and staff. Must work within the guidelines set up by the board of directors and MCC and have a retail/management background, be a mentoring person and enjoy working with people. Previous thrift shop experience helpful but not required. Please send resumés by U.S. mail only to Keith Heavener, Souderton Care and Share Shoppes, Souderton Center, 785 Route 113, Souderton, PA 18964. Call the main office at 215-723-0315 and leave a message if you have any questions.

Zion Mennonite Church in Souderton, Pa., is seeking a dynamic ***musician, conductor and song leader*** to continue an excellent worship tradition and take it to a new level. A complete job description for the position of minister of worship will be developed around the gifts of the candidate. Choir directing, worship planning, song leading and leadership of praise teams will be important roles of this ministry position. With interest contact Pastor Hunter Hess at 215-723-3592 during the day or 215-257-1115 evenings. Or email hunter@zionmennonite.org.

English conversation teachers needed. **Connexus**, a Korea Anabaptist Center ministry, needs university grads for 12-month terms. Variable start dates. Round-trip fare, salary, housing, training, etc. provided. Visit www.connexus.co.kr/english for more information.

Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich., is seeking a ***program director*** (start date in Fall 2007): Full-time salaried position including housing, insurance and meals. This person will be responsible for developing and overseeing all camp-sponsored program events. Contact Justin Weaver (justin@friedenswald.org or 269-476-9744) if interested.

First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alta. This vibrant, multi-generational, urban congregation of approximately 200 members, is seeking a ***half-time associate pastor*** with primary responsibilities for youth and young adults. The successful candidate will work with the lead pastor and with other leadership people of the congregation. Some pulpit and spiritual care ministries will also be expected. A seminary degree or a related bachelor's degree that reflects our Anabaptist-Mennonite beliefs and practices is preferred. Starting date is negotiable. For a more detailed job description please visit our Web site at http://edmonton1st.mennonitechurch.ab.ca. Interested applicants should forward questions and resumés to: Wesley Berg, Chair, Second Pastor Search Committee, c/o First Mennonite Church, 3650—91 Street, Edmonton, AB, Canada, T6E 6P1; 780-436-3431; wberg@ualberta.ca.

Goshen College seeks a director of ***alumni, church and parent relations***. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Salem Mennonite Church, located near the growing community of Tofield, Alta. (45 minutes Southeast of Edmonton), is seeking a ***lead pastor*** to minister to our congregation of 125 people. The successful candidate will have previous pastoral experience and/or a bachelor of theology degree or equivalent. Compensation will be commensurate with qualifications. Interested people should forward their resumés to: Carla Fendelet, Secretary, Salem Mennonite Church, Box 56, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0; fax 780-662-0106; email cgfen@telus.net.

Love nature and working with children and adults? Do you have leadership skills you would like to use in a new way? **Camp Friedenswald** is seeking a person to serve as ***outdoor learning assistant*** to start August 2007. This is a voluntary service position with stipend, housing, meals and insurance. Come and join us in the Peaceful Woods. Contact Justin Weaver, 269-476-9744 or justin@friedenswald.org.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. **Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.20 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.**

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Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) is seeking an individual to represent Mennonite Foundation with a focus on meeting donors' needs through charitable gift planning services and providing support of development activities of Anabaptist denominations, church institutions, and affiliated organizations. Qualified applicants will have a bachelor's degree in an applicable field; prior experience in charitable gift planning and/or estate planning; strong relationship building skills; ability and willingness to travel regionally. For more information about the responsibilities and qualifications of this position, please visit our Web site, www.mma-online.org, and go to "Careers."

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Sicko's ups and downs

Anna Groff

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

I felt sick and covered my eyes when I watched the opening scene in *Sicko*, which zoomed in on a man stitching up his own hand after accidentally cutting it on a saw.

From then on, I rode the emotional roller-coaster of Michael Moore's latest documentary. I laughed when Moore received blank stares from people in France after he asked them how much they paid to have their baby in the hospital. I teared up seeing a man working at a pharmacy at age 80 because he couldn't afford his medication otherwise.

"If there are golden years, I can't find them," the elderly man tells Moore, who pushes for universal health care for the nearly 50 million uninsured people in the United States.

My first encounter with health care was when my next-door neighbors, and playmates, were forbidden by their mother from climbing in our tree house. I asked my mother why they weren't allowed but we were. She said that perhaps my neighbor friend's family didn't have health insurance, so if she fell and hurt herself badly, only her emergency care would be covered.

Moore has learned the power of stories. Throughout the documentary he collects stories from people who live without health insurance and people who work or have worked within the health-insurance system. Moore asked people to send their stories to his Web site.

We can question how he selected the stories and how he presents them. We can be skeptical of the connections he has to the people he interviews in Europe and Canada. We can criticize that he only featured people living in urban areas in Canada.

But we can't deny that somehow the health-insurance system in the United States needs to change and that universal health care makes a lot of sense. Or that the United States is the only western industrialized country without universal health care. In *Sicko*, Moore says the people in France and England, who have universal health care and are grateful for the system, "live in a world of 'we,' not 'me.'"

Moore also depicts the healthier lives and lifestyles of Europeans versus Americans. The people he interviewed in France work fewer hours (while maintaining high productivity), have more vacation time and get paid time off when they have children. The church body can also model healthy living in how we find times for relaxation and retreat—both physically and spiritually. Especially when doing "church" or "service" work, we tend to overwork and overbook our lives, which can lead to illness, fatigue or burnout.

While interviewing Moore on The Tonight Show, Jay Leno said, "If you only believe half of what [Moore] says, it's still unbelievable." The publisher of *Yes!* magazine says it differently: "No matter how you feel about Michael Moore, bring friends and encourage everyone you know to see this film." I would agree, especially as Mennonite Church USA moves forward with its health-care access initiative.

I celebrate that this kind of conversation is happening within Mennonite Church USA and that it started five years ago at the Atlanta 2003 assembly. How can Americans expect the United States to change this powerful, lucrative system of private health if churches do not model this mutual aid and help one another in times of need?

Toward the end of the film, Moore tells how he gave an anonymous check of $12,000 to the man who runs the biggest anti-Moore Web site on the Internet. The man was about to close it down because he could not afford the cost and time of running the site with his wife's medical bills.

Moore certainly has the money to do this and knows how this can enhance public opinion about him. Still, it was difficult for me to consider funding a Web site aimed at bringing me down.

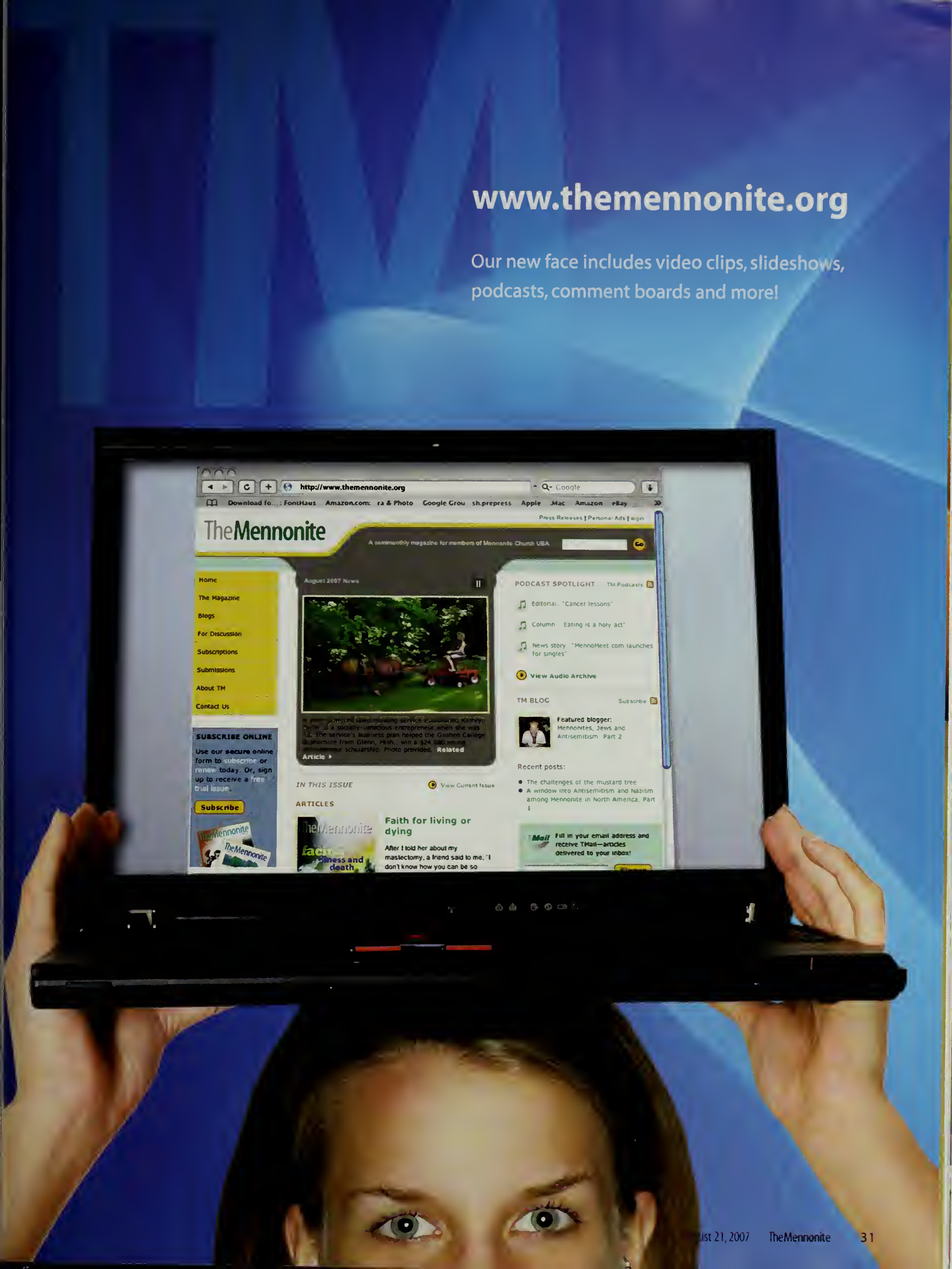
However, Moore said he believes no one in our country should suffer from not having health care, just as we all assume the services of libraries, firefighters and post offices. If Moore believes this, surely Mennonite Church USA can find a way to work at these health-care and mutual aid goals for our church workers—and beyond.

FILMS

Ratatouille (G) is one of the best popular films of the summer, another animated gem from Brad Bird, who also wrote and directed *The Incredibles.* This enchanting tale follows Remy, a lowly rat who longs to become a chef in Paris, and the unusual partnership he forms with a hapless cook named Linguini. Remy hides under Linguini's chef hat and, by pulling his hair at the right times, leads him to make fantastic dishes that restore the restaurant's former luster. Bird, a master storyteller, takes his time and gives attention to each character. The film also includes ethical and aesthetic lessons.—*Gordon Houser*

BOOKS

Invincible Spirits: A Thousand years of Women's Spiritual Writings, compiled by Felicity Leng (Eerdmans, 2006, $15), collects excerpts from the spiritual writings of women across the centuries and places them under 16 chapter headings, from "Love and Fulfillment" to "Illness and Transformation" to "Heaven and Eternity." This varied collection includes selections by and biographies of not only well-known mystics (Teresa of Avila, Julian of Norwich) but novelists (Emily Brontë), poets (Emily Dickinson) and many little-known women (Agnes Beaumont, Marie Lataste, Anna White, Marie Bashkirtseff and others).—*gh*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[illegible] lawn mowing service [illegible] Kathryn [illegible] a socially-[illegible] entrepreneur when she was [illegible] service's business plan helped the Goshen College sophomore from Glenn, Mich., win a $24,[illegible] scholarship. Photo provided.

Editorial. "Cancer lessons"

Column "Eating is a holy act"

News story "MennoMeet.com launches for singles"

Featured blogger: Mennonites, Jews and Antisemitism Part 2

- The challenges of the mustard tree
- A window into Antisemitism and Nazism among Mennonite in North America, Part 1

Faith for living or dying

After I told her about my mastectomy, a friend said to me, "I don't know how you can be so

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Susan Sommer is chair of the board of The Mennonite, Inc.

Communication mulling

With some reluctance I added a cell phone to my morning walk. Who wants a cell phone interruption first thing in the morning?

This got me thinking about the pros and cons of communication methods. It's a joy to receive TMail in my email inbox. TMail is an e-zine of *The Mennonite*. And it's free.

E-zine is not listed in my dictionary, but Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia, defines it as an online magazine.

I haven't found a downside for TMail, which is similar though not identical to *The Mennonite*, but then it doesn't interrupt me unless I want to be interrupted. A cell phone is something else. So much for quietly contemplating the sunrise.

Not that I have complete solitude on the early morning Illinois prairie. Lucy's usually there, ear phones in, connected to her music. We greet each other and sometimes comment on the weather. She works in accounting at our local bank.

Then there are the Baers, who have a milk cow and some breeder calves. A whole string of Baer family farmsteads are in the area, and my walk takes me by two of them. The Baer boys have the first field planted in the spring and the first one harvested in the fall—first corn up, first corn in.

They'll be the Baer Boys forever, though they have their own crop of boys. Maybe they'll even be Old Ben Baer's Boys forever. Maybe not. I don't hear my children referring to Old Ben, though I don't have to tell them who he was.

The Baers probably have cell phones. Cell phones are useful for cooperative farming, and these conservative German Baptists are not opposed to useful machinery.

The Baers always wave, and on occasion they'll greet me. Their sister Nancy and I became friends when her Custom Sewing shop was next door to my Tremont News and Printing.

On one early morning walk, I took a photo of the rising sun silhouetting a Baer farmstead. A few weeks later, when their teenaged son was killed in a tractor accident, I used the sunrise photo to make a sympathy card. Nancy phoned me, likely on her cell phone, with her appreciation.

Emailing the sympathy and photo would not have relayed the same message.

Last week I walked behind a woman whose slow progress across the parking lot, left hand to the ear and right hand gesturing were pretty good clues she was on her cell phone. While talking, she managed to exit and lock her vehicle, sling her purse over her shoulder, enter the store, grab a grocery cart, grab a courtesy cart sanitizer, wipe the cart handle and proceed to the produce—all without moving the phone from her ear. Clearly she was more interested in the phone conversation than in putting sweet corn into her shopping cart.

I headed for the baked goods, though not before giving her a meaningful glare, which was lost on her, since she gazed into midair, still gesturing. She was still talking in the checkout lane.

Spaced-out grocery shopping. Tuned in to her conversation but tuned out to the rest of us. Irritating.

Talk about irritating, our youngest child replies best to text messaging. Phone him at home, he doesn't answer. Leave a message, he doesn't reply. Call his cell phone, he doesn't pick up. But send a text message, and I have a reply.

I had to explain text messaging to my inlaws. They saw no need for another complication.

"Why?"

"It's quicker. You can tell a TM because the ring is different. It's great when Jim's in a meeting and has his phone on vibrate. I used it at San José. Jim was center front at Table Six, while I was on the periphery at Table 80. 'Meet me at the drinking fountain.' "

"Couldn't you just arrange that ahead of time?"

"Yes, but text messaging can be useful." I didn't tell her about Jim's cell phone ringing during the delegate session; it was probably this that drew the moderator's gentle reprimand. It wasn't my TM that set it ringing, though.

Still mulling communication's intricacies during my early morning walk, I remembered my son's birthday. So right then and there, between the Baers' cornfield on the north and their bean field on the south, I TM'd him a birthday greeting.

When I got no response, I asked him about it.

"Mom, it was 6 a.m."—*ss*

I had to explain text messaging to my inlaws. They saw no need for another complication.

Everett J. Thomas is on sabbatical until Nov. 1.

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September 4, 2007

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A unity that accepts our differences

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

I have been thinking about ordination. While ordination is something the rest of the church takes for granted, in Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference, it's still a topic of debate.

Some of us believe ordination ought to be granted equally to women and men. Some believe it ought to be reserved for men. Some wonder why we ordain anybody.

Some use Luther's language of the "priesthood of all believers" to argue against ordination. Some reply that we're not Lutherans and that ordination was practiced by most streams of Anabaptism from their beginnings. Some wonder why we don't all just give up on the quest for ecclesial approval. Some wonder why ordination seemed like a perfectly fine idea until women began seeking it.

Some argue that there is no New Testament basis for ordination. Some respond that there is also no New Testament basis for denominations, seminaries or mission boards. Some believe that if we cannot find it in the Scriptures we ought to forget it. Some believe there are other sources of authority to consider when talking of ordination.

I believe the following:

- God gifts and calls women and men to be ministers to the church.
- The church ought not get between the one gifted and her ability to exercise those gifts.
- The church ought to affirm the gifts of women in the same way as men, by ordination.
- We have a missional obligation to encourage, affirm and celebrate the pastoral gifts of women.
- The future of our congregation, our conference and our denomination depends on fulfilling that obligation.

My beliefs place me at odds with my "conservative" sisters and brothers, who believe that pastoral ministry belongs to men. They place me at odds with my "progressive" sisters and brothers, who view ordination as just another form of the power that corrupts. And they put me at odds with sisters and brothers who think the issue is a distraction from the true work of the church.

What does it mean to be a people when what seems most clearly to define us are our disagreements? It's easy to say, let's put them aside and focus on Jesus. But often the source of those disagreements is precisely our understanding of who Jesus is and what he is calling us to become.

Rather than insisting we keep our opinions to ourselves and behave only in prescribed ways in order to get along, what if instead we celebrated our many ways of understanding Jesus?

Admittedly this takes a level of tolerance and trust that seems beyond most of us. But we're Mennonites. Aren't we all about the hard work of faithfulness?

Jesus told us to love one another and so reveal him to the world. Too often we take that to mean putting our convictions under a bushel for the sake of a fraudulent unity, one that mistakes silence for humility, fear for wisdom and coercion for love. The world has seen enough of that kind of unity.

What it rarely sees is a unity that insists we all need not be quiet and sit on our opinions, that sees faithfulness to Christ as coming in many forms, that is found not only in our ability to be generous and merciful toward one another but is found also in our vigorous disagreements and our diverse expressions of faithfulness, that celebrates the varied activities among faithful, imperfect people.

If nothing else, working toward such unity will make us a more interesting people, a people that genuinely has something to say about Christian love, the kind of people I hope someday to be part of, differences and all.

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org.

TheMennonite

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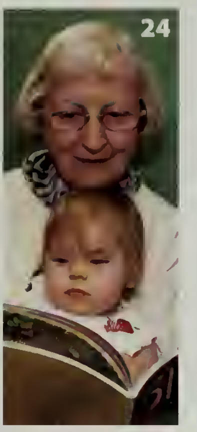
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ONLINE POLL RESULTS

My congregation has discussed Communion: (37 votes)

○ Yes, and we are in agreement (35%)

○ Yes, and we are not in agreement (43%)

○ No (8%)

○ Not sure (14%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Article as good as a seminary class

Over a period of years I was privileged to take Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary extension classes in North Newton, Kan. Later, taking nine hours on the seminary campus in Elkhart, Ind., a requirement to complete my Certificate of Theology, I still did not have the privilege of taking a class from AMBS president J. Nelson Kraybill. His article "And on Earth Peace" (July 3) more than made up for this felt lack, and I was greatly blessed.—*Elda Bachman, North Newton, Kan.*

Beware of presenting 'another gospel'

I was baffled and troubled that *The Mennonite* (and the Church Member Profile) used the term "cradle Mennonites" (July 24). As a church we have spent two generations reclaiming the New Testament insight that defined Anabaptism, that the only way to become a Christian is to come to faith in Christ, be baptized and received into membership in a local congregation of the body of Christ. The only way to become a Mennonite is to come to faith in Christ and be baptized into a Mennonite congregation.

Any other understanding substitutes ethnicity for faith and denigrates the faith of someone not born to parents who were members of a Mennonite congregation. Is such an understanding not in danger of becoming "another gospel" to the one proclaimed in the New Testament, in the sense that Paul uses the term in Galatians (1:6 and the whole letter)?—*John D. Rempel, Elkhart Ind.*

Articles on cancer helpful

Thanks for the excellent, helpful articles (Aug. 7) about dealing with cancer. I agree with the dos and don'ts ("The Abuses in Illness" by Faye Nyce). "Homeward Bound" by Steve Steiner was touching, and "Cancer Lessons" (Editorial) by Gordon Houser was helpful. I found these articles instructive since I have been coping for the last several years with facial cancer surgeries and radiation treatments.—*Elno Steiner, Goshen, Ind.*

I am thankful for Faye Nyce's thoughtful article "The Abuse in Illness" (Aug. 7). I hope it will help each of us become an advocate for the person with an illness. I suggest each of us ponder the "dos" and "don'ts" of this article as we visit one who is ill.—*Barbara Longenecker, Lititz, Pa.*

Principled liberalism

The article by Dennis Koehn (Speaking Out, Aug. 7) troubles me. What is principled liberalism? He seems to try to make a point out of a nonpoint. For a Christian there should only be biblical liberalism.

Jesus is more than a wise teacher or fervent prophet. He is the Son of God. Anyone who knows John 3:16 also knows John 14:6. Jesus did teach that good works were essential for eternal life (Matthew 25), but he also taught knowing him was also essential (John 6:24).

Koehn made some good points, but he missed the main point. May he discover the Giver of Abundant Life before he wears out doing his good works.—*Doris Martin, Gettysburg, Pa.*

Re "Principled Liberalism" (Aug. 7), I appreciated the note that the views expressed do not necessarily represent the official positions of the magazine or Mennonite Church USA. The writer's statement that "promoting these values is more important than converting people of other faiths to Christianity" made me question if this was the denomination I was warned about as being insular and unevangelical.

I did not have the privilege of growing up in a church community, but I'm grateful for a local colony of Anabaptists who went out of their way to invite me into their fold. I hope future columns speak less on philosophical stances and more on what it means to be the church in our time and place.—*Kevin Tang, Ann Arbor, Mich.*

Courageous remarks

Thanks to Donald Gering for his courageous remarks (Readers Say, Aug. 21) about the men's comments from the pornography seminar. It is good for women to understand how powerful a man's sex drive can be and for men and women to understand our godly responsibility to treat one another with respect and dignity. Until all men acknowledge that giving in to sexual temptation is harmful to the women they love most, sexual abuse and exploitation will continue. I applaud Mr. Gering's generous, loving gift to his wife's healing process.—*Carolyn Good, Taftsville, Vt.*

IN THIS ISSUE

If you read "A Test of Unity" (page 15), you'll see that the practice of Communion seems to be one that our congregations experience differences of opinion about. The three authors (all pastors) of that article testify, however, that it is possible and good to discuss this. Marlene Kropf (page 8) argues that we make Communion a greater priority in our congregations. Pat Shaver (page 12) testifies that we can experience transformation through Communion. Other articles in this issue address unity (page 2), national identity (page 18), interchurch relations (page 22), modesty (page 30) and missional worship (page 32).—*Acting editor*

Prayer requests
at a Mennonite church

by Todd Davis

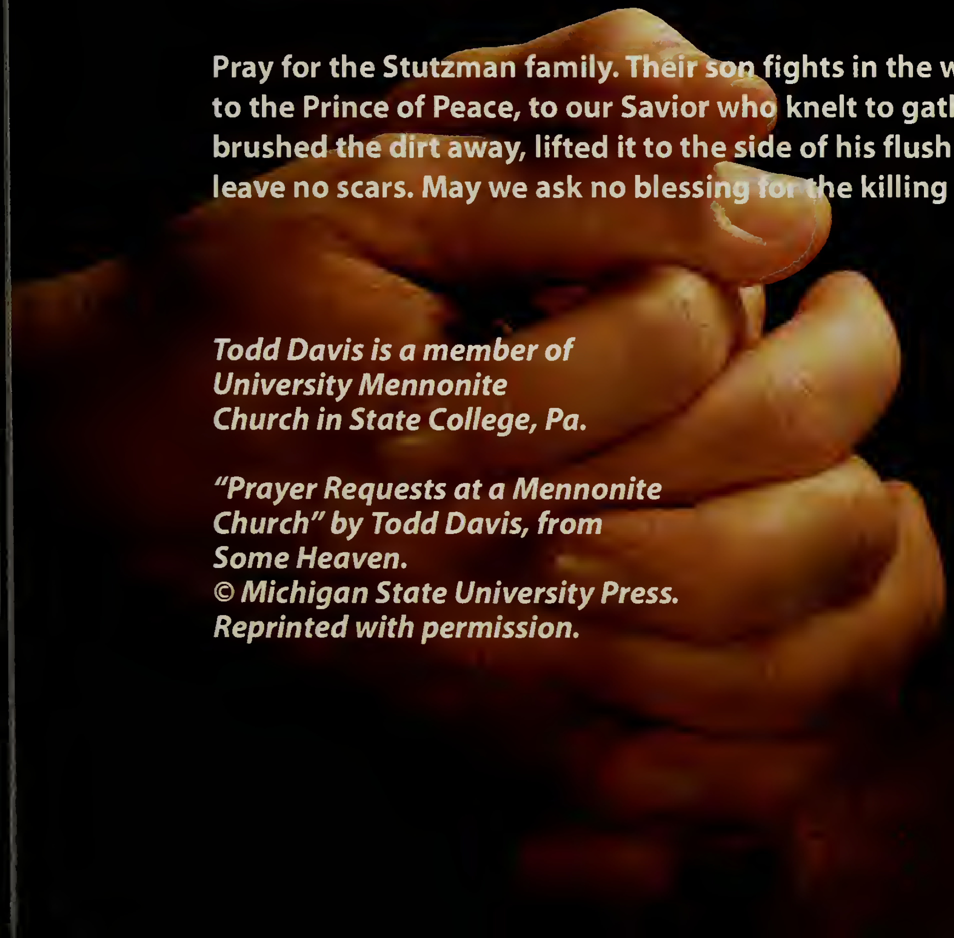
Pray for the Smucker family. Their son Nathaniel's coat and shirt were caught in the gears while grinding grain. Nothing would give, so now he is gone. We made his clothes too well. Perhaps this is our sin.

Pray for the Birky family. Their son Jacob fell to his death in the granary. He was covered in corn before they could stop the pouring—chest crushed by the weight, seed spilling from his mouth. We hope something will grow from this, besides our grief.

Pray for the Hartzler family. Their youngest has left the church and no longer believes that Christ died for her sins. She buys clothes at the mall. Tongue pierced, nose as well. Her shirt shows her belly where a ring of gold sprouts. We pray she will remember that her Lord's side was pierced, that his crown held no gold, only the dried blood of his brow.

Pray for the Miller family. Last week their daughter, who lives in Kalona, lost her baby at birth. Child only half-formed: head turned the wrong way; heart laid on the outside of her chest; one leg little more than an afterthought. Lord, help them know that life may come again, that we are all made whole in heaven.

Pray for the Stutzman family. Their son fights in the war. We call him back to the Prince of Peace, to our Savior who knelt to gather the slave's ear, brushed the dirt away, lifted it to the side of his flushed face. May we leave no scars. May we ask no blessing for the killing done in His name.



Todd Davis is a member of University Mennonite Church in State College, Pa.

"Prayer Requests at a Mennonite Church" by Todd Davis, from Some Heaven.
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IN BRIEF

MARP announces Roth as executive director

The Mennonite Association of Retired Persons has selected Jay L. Roth of Lancaster, Pa., as the organization's third executive director. Roth will succeed Helen L. Lapp, who is retiring after eight years. Roth previously served as principal and assistant principal of Locust Grove Mennonite, Smoketown, Pa., from 1997 to 2007 and as assistant principal from 1990 to 1996 at Penn View Christian School, Souderton, Pa. He graduated from Eastern Mennonite University in 1981 with a bachelor's degree in education and from Temple University in 1995 with a master's degree in educational administration. —*MARP*

Final count for money for children in Congo

The final count is in for the money children at the San José 2007 convention collected for medical supplies for children in the Congo: $2801.01. The children approached other conventiongoers, explained the need for medical supplies and asked for change.—*Carol Grieser*

Reba Place Church holds 50-year celebration

EVANSTON, Ill.—Reba Place Church and Fellowship celebrated its 50th anniversary Aug. 3-5 with a jubilee celebration.

Reba Place Church, founded in 1957, began as an intentional Christian community with roots in social justice, peace and racial reconciliation.

The jubilee celebration included liturgical dance and worship music, multimedia presentations and exhibits of art, quilts and photography.

More than 500 current and former Reba Place Church and Fellowship members gathered on Aug. 3. The next day included five decade-by-decade presentations given by leaders from each decade, many of whom are no longer members of the community.

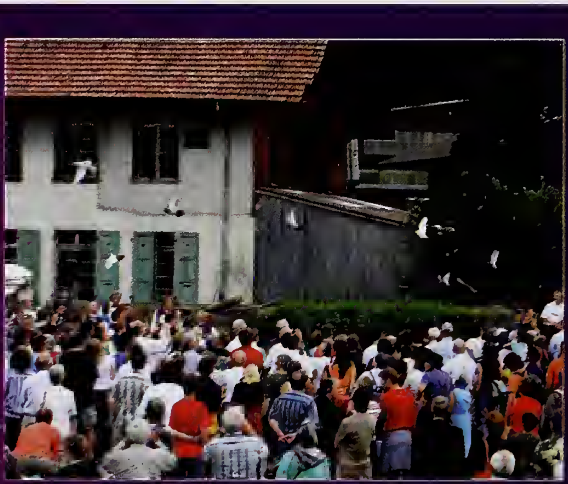
The following organizations have emerged from the ministries of Reba Place Church and Fellowship: Reba Place Day Nursery; Hilda's Place, the North Shore's only homeless shelter; Reba Place Development Corporation, a housing program that supports affordable housing; Ten Thousand Villages; Plain and Simple, an Amish furniture store; and Senior Connections, a social service agency.—*Reba Place Church and Fellowship*

Eight arrested during vigil on Hiroshima Day

EDINA, Minn.—On Aug. 6, eight participants carried roses toward the front door of Alliant Techsystems, Inc. (ATK) in Edina to remember those who died in the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 62 years ago.

When stopped by several ATK employees and Edina police, the eight attempted to engage in dialogue and negotiate entrance to the building. Police warned the group to leave or they would be arrested. The eight then knelt in prayer. Each person received a citation for trespassing that carries a $142 fine.

Approximately 40 people representing Christian Peacemaker Teams, Alliant Action and other Minnesota peace groups gathered at the headquarters of Alliant Techsystems, Inc. They also offered prayers for those who have suffered the effects of Depleted Uranium poisoning in recent years. —*CPT*



Dan Siegrist

Doves released during Täuferjahr in Switzerland

The release of peace doves during closing calls for building new bridges and friendships between the Swiss Reformed and Mennonites follows an international worship service July 29. More than 3,500 people attended. Some 250 Mennonite Church USA members participated with many Swiss Mennonites in the 200 different Täuferjahr 2007 events.—*Joanne Hess Siegrist*

Justus G. Holsinger, mission worker, dies

HESSTON, Kan.—Justus G. Holsinger, an educator, administrator, writer and mission worker, died Aug. 8 at Newton (Kan.) Medical Center.

Holsinger was born July 8, 1911, near Harrisonburg, Va., to Henry S. and Elizabeth Cline Holsinger.

Holsinger

He met Salome Fast in Puerto Rico, where he was serving in Civilian Public Service during World War II, and she was serving as a nurse with Mennonite Central Committee.

She survives, along with their four children: Dave, of Houston; Don, of Edmonds, Wash.; Betty Shenk, of Harrisonburg; and Becky Rand, of Winter Park, Colo.; plus 11 grandchildren and two great-grandsons.

Holsinger taught at Bluffton (Ohio) University, Hesston (Kan.) College and Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and was academic dean at Hesston and director of teacher education at Bethel.

He served as executive secretary of the Council of Mennonite Colleges.

He returned to Puerto Rico from 1948 to 1952 to direct the La Plata Project.

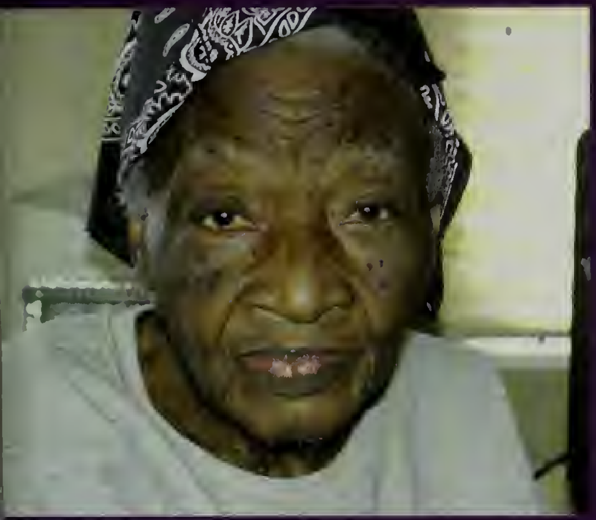
Later he helped the Academia Menonita de Summit Hills, a K-12 school in Aibonito, receive accreditation.

During his retirement, he helped start the Santa Cruz Christian Learning Center in Bolivia.

The memorial service was Aug. 18.—*Susan Balzer*

MMA and Mennonite Financial join services

GOSHEN, Ind./LANCASTER, Pa.—On Aug. 27, Mennonite Financial Federal Credit Union and Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) announced they



Everett Thomas

DS to finish house for woman's 100-year birthday

se Cosy will turn 100 on Oct. 13. She hopes her Katrina-rav-
ed house will be finished by Mennonite Disaster Service vol-
teers in time for her birthday party. But when John Kroeker,
S project manager, checked on her house and visited Cosy in
r FEMA trailer on Aug. 23, she was waiting patiently. "I'm wait-
g on the Lord," said Cosy. "You don't rush people when they
doing all they can to make you comfortable." Since
rricane Katrina made landfall on Aug. 29, 2005, MDS has
mpleted 122 jobs in New Orleans, including 85 cleanups, 34
nor repairs and three major repairs. Volunteers also complet-
the spacious MDS facility in New Orleans that can house up
40 volunteers at a time. Although the MDS facility in New
leans will close for the month of September, Kroeker says
re are eight to 10 houses lined up for the many volunteers
o will participate in MDS work in New Orleans beginning in
tober. These projects include the first three complete
builds" (demolition and new construction) by MDS in the
w Orleans area. *The Mennonite* will provide a two-year retro-
ctive on MDS work in Mississippi and Louisiana in the Sept.
issue.—*Everett J. Thomas*

have formed a partnership to serve Mennonites and other Anabaptists nationwide with stewardship-oriented financial services.

The organizations will develop combined offices around the country, particularly in areas with large concentrations of Anabaptists.

When and where they will combine services in the future is still in discussion.

"We share with MMA a passion to serve people and organizations in our church community with services that complement their faith values," says Kent Hartzler, president and CEO of Mennonite Financial in Lancaster.

"We're excited about offering basic financial services to our members," says Larry Miller, president and CEO of MMA in Goshen. "Younger generations particularly need basic money management products from someone they trust."

Both organizations also serve church-related institutions and Anabaptist-owned businesses with asset management and employee benefits.

They plan to expand their services to these groups as well. In three Pennsylvania towns—Lancaster, Belleville and Ephrata—the organizations already share office space.—*MMA*

Young adults begin MCC assignments

AKRON, Pa.—One-hundred two young adults were schedule to begin Mennonite Central Committee service assignments around the world after an Aug. 11-16 orientation session at MCC's campus in Akron.

Fifty-one U.S. and Canadian young adults are beginning 11-month assignments in Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East through MCC's Serving and Learning Together program.

Another 51 international young adults attended the orientation before beginning one-year assignments in the United States and Canada through MCC's International Volunteer Exchange Program.

Both programs place Christian young adults in volunteer positions with churches, schools and community organizations.

During the orientation session in Akron, participants shared six days of cross-cultural learning, worship and workshops in preparation for their assignments.—*MCC*

Bethel College presents first San José check

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Bethel College, North Newton, did something different with its display at the San José 2007 Youth Convention.

Staff from Bethel's admissions, alumni and church relations offices figured out about what they would spend on giveaways—around $4,000.

They decided instead to divide the money—up to $1,000 apiece—among three service organizations within the Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference region, and one additional organization.

The first of the organizations, Goldensun Peace Ministries, a community-building program for developmentally disabled adults, received its check of $1,000 on Aug. 12, when Dale Schrag, Bethel's director of church relations, visited Trinity Mennonite Church in Glendale, Ariz.—the organization's sponsoring congregation.

The amounts depended on youth visiting the display each day and dropping marked tickets into a special ticket tumbler.

When they came by to leave their tickets, youth signed a large sheet of canvas to be presented to each of the service organizations.—*Bethel College*

—*compiled by Anna Groff*

IN BRIEF

Bluffton appoints associate dean of academics

Bluffton (Ohio) University has announced the appointment of Gayle Trollinger as associate dean of academic affairs. Trollinger has been a part of Bluffton's education department since 1996. She will maintain her role as coordinator of the North Central Accreditation self-study and accreditation visits and oversee the graduate programs in education as well as beginning the role of associate dean.—*Bluffton University*

Former EMU librarian dies at 88

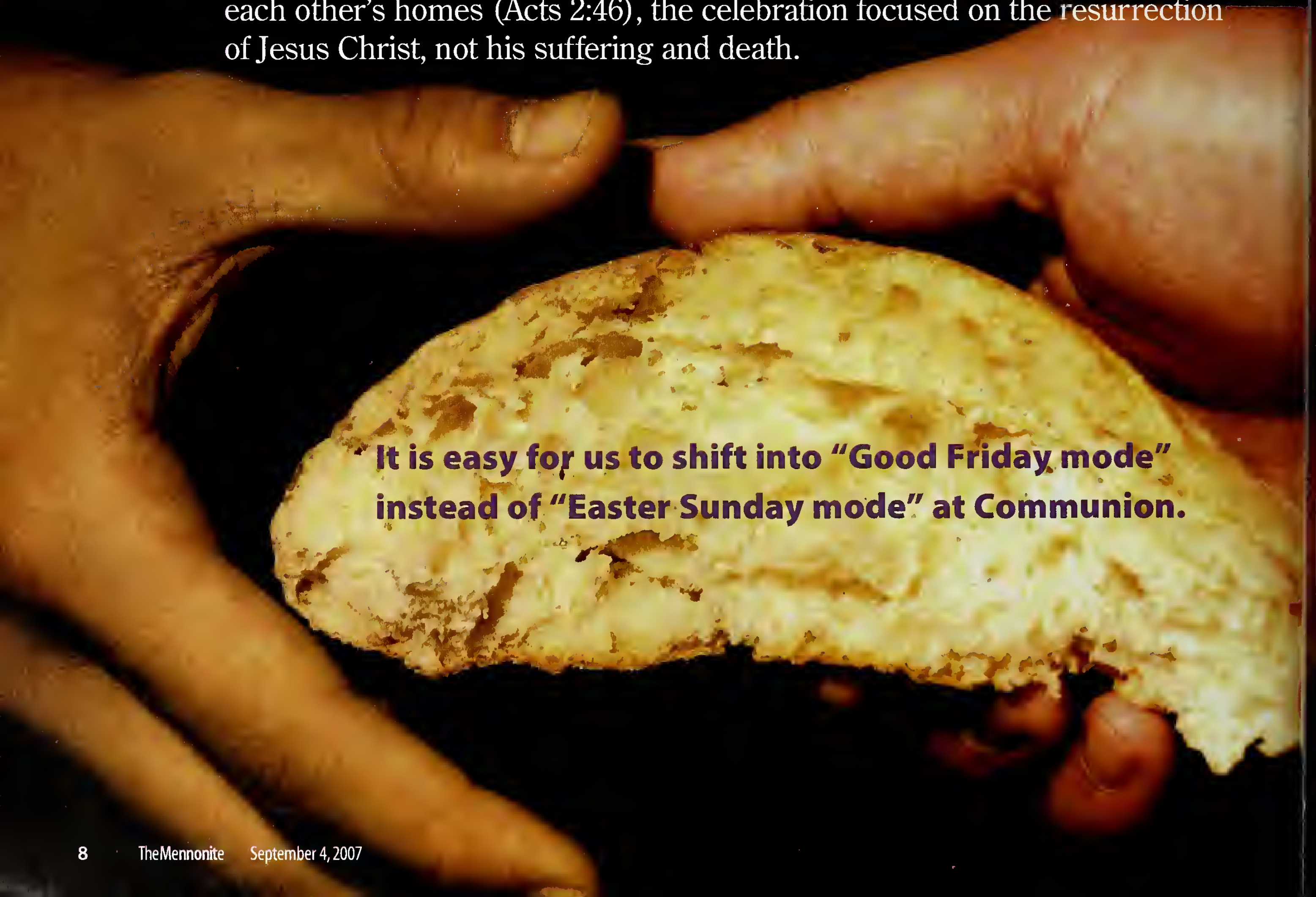
Margaret M. Shenk, 88, librarian emerita at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 11 at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, Harrisonburg, Va. Shenk served in a variety of roles at Hartzler Library from 1950 to 1984. She was head librarian from 1961 to 1973. A 1949 EMU graduate, Shenk earned a master's degree in library science from George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tenn. A memorial service was held Aug. 17 at Park View Mennonite Church.—*EMU*

A modest proposal fo

by Marlene Kropf

The room is quiet. All eyes are fixed on the leader, who speaks in solemn tones: "On the night he was betrayed, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me' " (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Grief and sadness expand and fill the room. Remembering the suffering and death of Jesus, we come quietly and reverently to receive the bread and cup at the Lord's Table.

Repeated over and over again throughout the world, the ritual of Communion is the primal act of the Christian church. Though this meal has its origins in the Jewish Passover meal (a remembrance and celebration of deliverance from bondage), it soon became a central symbol for early Christians. But from the disciples who shared a meal with Jesus at Emmaus (Luke 24:28-32) to the believers who gladly and repeatedly broke bread in each other's homes (Acts 2:46), the celebration focused on the resurrection of Jesus Christ, not his suffering and death.



It is easy for us to shift into "Good Friday mode" instead of "Easter Sunday mode" at Communion.

Communion

Why Communion should be joyful, nonviolent, just, open and frequent

That the resurrection is the center of the story was further symbolized by the choice of the early church to come together to worship on the first day of the week, the day Jesus was raised. Additional evidence indirectly confirming this emphasis on the resurrection is the absence of the "words of institution" and the passion story from the Didache, a late first-century document containing early rubrics for Communion. What the first Christians understood so clearly is that death is not the end. Life is.

Yet there is a distinct contrast between those first joyful celebrations and our typical solemn or penitential rites. Because we (like most other churches) have chosen to use 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 as the main story we tell at Communion, it is easy for us to shift into "Good Friday mode" instead of "Easter Sunday mode" at Communion.

I remember how startled I was the first time I heard these words at Communion: "Among friends, gathered around a table, Jesus took bread and broke it and said, 'This is my body—broken for you'" (from *A Wee Worship Book*).

I couldn't believe what a difference the change of a few words made. The image of Jesus gathering around a table with his friends (also an accurate description of the Last Supper) brought immediately to mind Jesus' intimate fellowship with his disciples, the many meals he shared with followers such as Mary and Martha, the table fellowship at Emmaus and even the Messianic banquet of the future. Instead of feeling burdened, I approached the Communion table with anticipation and joy.

In addition to our lopsided focus on suffering to the exclusion of resurrection, there's another distortion we unwittingly engage in at Communion. In a remarkable essay, "The Nonviolent Eucharist" (www.ecapc.org/articles/McCartC_Eucharistic.asp), Emmanuel Charles McCarthy challenges the church's neglect of essential aspects of Jesus' story when we come to the Lord's Table. He makes the point that the most important detail of the story, the defining essence, is Jesus' gift of the New Commandment: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another" (John 13:34). He goes on to say, "Imagine how the world would be today if this New Commandment as taught on the first Holy Thursday and lived unto death on the first Good Friday was continuously remembered in Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Eucharistic prayers throughout the ages." In other words, how might we and the world be different if the story we told at every Communion service remembered that Jesus rejected violence, loved his enemies, prayed for his persecutors and called all his followers to the way of love?

Surely in Mennonite churches, where we have tried to follow Jesus' way of peace, we ought not to have forgotten to tell that part of the story. While it's true that the story from John 13 was often told in foot-washing services in the past, today we no longer typically link Communion and foot-washing rituals—and so we are in danger of losing one of the most significant parts of the story in our community of faith.

There is yet another distortion that threatens to weaken our Communion rituals. When the early church gathered to break bread and remember the resurrection, their festive meal took place within a context of economic sharing (Acts 4:32-33). Eating together meant sharing not only the memory of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, it meant being willing to share their lives and resources in ordinary, everyday ways. In one of our favorite hymns, we sing, "And we accept bread at his table, broken and shared, a living sign. Here in this world, dying and living, we are each other's bread and wine" ("What Is This Place," *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, #1).

Surely one of the deeper meanings of breaking bread in Jesus' memory is to open our hands and hearts to share bread with anyone who is hungry.

Yet what message is proclaimed when our Communion rituals appear to be an in-house meal for a closed circle? We typically spread a table and consume all the food for ourselves. Surely one of the deeper meanings of breaking bread in Jesus' memory is to open our hands and hearts to share bread with anyone who is hungry. I know of a church in which the bread and cup are processed forward to the Communion table during the worship service. At the same time these gifts of God are brought forward, a shopping cart (or more

Continued on page 10

Without the discipline of regular encounters at the Lord's Table, our faith and character will not be fully formed into Christlikeness.

Continued from page 9

than one) of food collected for the hungry is rolled forward and placed near the Communion table. When the prayer of thanksgiving is offered, God's blessing is invoked upon both the bread and cup of Communion and the food that will feed the hungry. At the very least, our prayers at Communion ought to include petitions on behalf of the hungry and intercessions for justice in the world.

Finally, our practice of infrequent Communion threatens to make us anemic Christians. From ancient times, the church has gathered often at the Lord's Table (at first because ordinary meals included ritual blessings of bread and wine and later because both preaching and Communion were considered essential parts of worship on the Lord's Day). Even the first Anabaptists, according to an early Congregational Order, were encouraged to break bread as often as the church gathered. This practice is also commended by our most recent confession of faith (Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, page 52).

A modest proposal for Communion
Let the Christians of the world agree that they will eat together at the Lord's Table.

© fotolia.com

Yet until recently, most Mennonite congregations have gathered at the Lord's Table only twice a year. While there are likely historical reasons for such infrequent observance (*The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. V, page 171), the result has been unbalanced worship. Without a profound body-and-soul encounter with the Risen Christ at the center of our worship, we run the risk of joyless spirituality and empty deeds. In effect, we voluntarily starve ourselves when we could be well nourished.

In her book *Communion Shapes Character* (Herald Press, 1997), Eleanor Kreider affirms: "Full-orbed Christian worship, Sunday upon Sunday, uniting the services of the Word and of the Lord's Supper, has a life-giving, maturing effect on our churches, not least on their visible character." It's not just a matter of passion and joy.

Without the discipline of regular encounters at the Lord's Table, our faith and character will not be fully formed into Christlikeness.

I dream of a day when Mennonite congregations will recover a richer practice of Communion. To start, we could experiment with monthly Communion services, making more space for the ritual to do its powerful, transforming work. During Holy Week we would certainly gather solemnly to remember the suffering of our Lord and to give thanks for our salvation, but during the rest of the year we would explore a wide variety of biblical themes on Communion Sundays, always centering on the resurrection and always telling the story of Jesus' call to love even our enemies. And as we tell that story of love, we will discover how we are being called to break bread with the poor, to share who we are and what we have with the least of these.

I dream of a day when the Lord's Table and the stories we tell there will become the unifying center for all who follow Christ. Our current unwillingness to gather at the same table is surely one of the most serious failures of the church today. Perhaps we need something like Mennonite Central Committee's "A Modest Proposal for Peace." Beyond asking Christians to promise not to kill each other, we could take another big step forward and ask the Christians of the world to agree to eat together at the Lord's Table. Such a demonstration of love for one another would be a potent witness for peace. United at the Lord's Table and telling the story of Jesus' nonviolent love of friends and enemies, Christians may yet become grace-filled signs of God's love and mercy in a world longing for healing and hope.

Marlene Kropf is minister for worship, congregational and ministerial leadership for Mennonite Church USA.

Additional recommended reading

The Feast of Our Lives: Re-imaging Communion by Jane Christine Goudey (Pilgrim Press, 2002)

The Eucharist and the Hunger of the World (second edition) by Monika K. Hellwig (Sheed & Ward,1992)

Communion Shapes Character by Eleanor Kreider (Herald Press,1997)

Amazing grace

by Charles Semones

for K. C.

Outdoors, the weather is doing its best to make a bad impression.
My young neighbor across the hall comes over for conversation
and coffee. Though almost forty years lie between us it is
of no consequence. He tells me I am one of his best friends,
just as he is one of mine. Suddenly, for no reason I can explain,
I think we could be two of the apostles, maybe Peter and John
hanging out together while the other ten take their ease beside
the Sea of Galilee indulging in chit-chat or catching up on their sleep,
and our leader, he who never seems to rest, is checking out the water's
surface to see if it's substantial. I know what Newton called grace—
he dubbed it amazing—and to those who feel it as flesh and blood-stun,
the adjective is sound. I remember the seventies and Judy Collins
singing that old hymn sans guitar in her voice as pure as spring water
that stole the heart of a nation whether on a city street or in a small town
square or a country kitchen. But grace does not reside in the hymn
that Newton wrote when the ocean roiled, nor is it a fragrance
we catch a whiff of like lilacs blooming in heaven's dooryards,
but something I can touch like my friend's hand he extends
to me each time he comes to visit or I go across the hall to visit him.
Surely the Master, when he comes back from walking on the water
and gathers us together, will be the first to agree with me
that amazing grace and human love are horns on the same goat.

Charles Semones lives in Harrodsburg, Ky.

A sermon for Transfiguration Sunday

Table of trans

by Pat Shaver

When I was growing up, Christmas dinner was always roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, with a chocolate ladyfinger torte for dessert. It reflected my mother's New England and English background. In the family I have now, Christmas dinner is a Mexican stew and pie, which reflects our family's preferences and my husband's family history in Arizona.

We eat thousands of meals during our lifetime. Most of them aren't particularly memorable, but some stand out in our minds. Our stories about meals reveal important things about our lives, reminding us of who we are and where we come from.

Communion began as a full meal, and though a piece of bread and swallow of juice don't feel like a meal, they carry the essence of one. Like the meal stories in our lives, the Lord's Supper proclaims a story. It tells the story of God's creating, redeeming and liberating love, of Jesus' coming to us—his life, ministry, death and resurrection, with the new life it promises.

We don't have just one meal story. Our meal stories reflect specific times and circumstances in our lives or those of our ancestors. We have stories of last meals, the last meal we had with Grandpa before he died, and memorial meals, the meal we shared with the extended family after an aunt's funeral service.

We have meal stories that tell of hardship, of fleeing one country for another. Some of us tell stories of ancestors who dried loaves of zwieback to eat on the ship that brought them to America. Whenever they hear or see the word "zwieback," they think of the journey of their ancestors.

We remember some meals because they bring something we didn't expect. The taste of a certain food can bring back a flood of memories from the past. Or a meal can bring new, surprising information—a couple announces their engagement or someone shares a personal story and we come to understand them differently.

Some meal stories are significant because of the people and fellowship involved—get-togethers with good friends, the tradition of pizza lunches in the youth room at Seattle Mennonite or the fourth Sunday community meals we eat with people from our church neighborhood.

Some meals are celebrations of victory, as in a fight against cancer, or celebrations of achievement, such as marriage or graduation.

Just as we don't have only one meal story, Communion doesn't have just one story. It is rich with metaphors that tell us about aspects of Jesus and invite our response.

A memorial story. The first Communion story we tend to think of is a last meal story—Jesus' last

Communion is rich with metaphors that tell us about aspects of Jesus and invite our response.

formation

supper with his disciples. It is a story about sacrificial death, containing phrases such as “on the night that he was betrayed,” describing the bread as Jesus’ body and the wine as his blood, poured out for us as a new covenant. It is also a memorial story. Paul says that whenever we eat the bread and drink the cup, we “proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Words like betrayed, broken, blood poured out and the Lord’s death are hard words to hear. I admit I tend to stop paying attention right there and think of the Lord’s Supper as only a memorial service remembering Jesus’ death. But that isn’t where the story stops.

A story of thanksgiving. We need to pay more attention to the phrase new covenant. At Communion we don’t just remember Jesus’ death but that God raised him from the dead. Our Confession of Faith says, “Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, God has rescued believers from sin and evil and brought them into a new covenant”—a new agreement or promise. “The church’s response to God’s salvation through Jesus includes thankfulness.” So the Lord’s Supper is also a story of thanksgiving, which is where the term “eucharist” comes from. Eucharist means thanksgiving.

A story of liberation. Communion is also a story of liberation from hardship—an exodus of deliverance. This comes from the fact that the Last Supper took place during the Jewish celebration of Passover. The purpose of the Passover celebration was to help people remember God’s great act of freeing the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12). “Jesus’ Last Supper signaled that he was leading his followers in a new exodus out of bondage and into salvation. As we relive this event with a common meal, we give thanks for all God’s acts of deliverance in the past and present, for the forgiveness of sins and for God’s continuing grace in our lives.”

A story of the Risen Christ. Meal stories involving the Risen Christ contain the unexpected. The disciples don’t recognize Jesus until he sits down with them at the table, takes bread, blesses it and gives it to them. Then memories of other times he did that same action come flooding back, and they recognize him and understand him in a new way, as someone whom death could not stop. The Lord’s Supper is more than a memorial meal. When our Confession of Faith says the Lord’s Supper “re-presents the presence of the Risen Christ in the church,” it means that the supper makes Christ present again. It continues: “As Christians eat the bread and drink the cup, they experience Christ’s presence in their midst. The Lord’s Supper both represents Christ and is a way in which Christ is present again in the body of believers.”

A story of fellowship. The Lord’s Supper is also a fellowship meal of the church, from which comes another of its names, Communion. Just as Jesus invited the community of his disciples to share the cup and bread in fellowship with him and each other around the same table, Jesus-as-Host also invites us to the table. He is present at this meal as the risen and unseen host. Later, believers in the early church ate together and came to understand the bread as a sign of unity in the Christian community. As we take Communion together, “we renew our baptismal covenant with God and with each other and recognize our unity with all believers everywhere in all times.”

Christ shares himself with us through the bread and wine, and we—the body of Christ—share bread and wine with each other.

A banquet story. The Messianic banquet, another type of meal in the Bible, is a victory celebration of the day when Jesus Christ has triumphed and Christians will feast with Christ in the fullness of God’s reign. This is a celebration at the Lamb’s feast, which we await with hope and joy. (Revelation 19:6-7a, 9a).

So Communion is actually the story of many different meals that speak to us of Jesus’ death and resurrection, liberation, the Risen Christ, the church’s meal and the Messianic banquet. Most Communion services touch on each of these themes, but a given service generally focuses on just one of them. To enter more fully into Communion, we may listen for which theme is being emphasized and how that is done.

How do we describe what happens during Communion? The first Anabaptists understood

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that transformation takes place in Communion, but it is of people, not objects. As Arthur Boers says: "Communion is not a sacred object in which Christ is contained; it is a sacred event. It is not 'mere memorial.' Something actually happens. When the church gathers in faith and love, open to the power of the Spirit, Christ is made present in the sharing of bread and wine." At the Lord's Table, Christ shares himself with us through the bread and wine, and we—the body of Christ—share bread and wine with each other.

If Christ is risen and with us always, why do we need to celebrate the Lord's Supper? Eleanor Kreider suggests that it's the difference between being told "I love you" and being kissed. Words are good, but a tangible expression touches us in a different way. God is Spirit, beyond our knowledge and understanding, beyond any words we could use, but we humans are both body and spirit. If we open ourselves to receive it, Communion is a way for God to touch us through our whole being, which is both physical and spiritual.

How is God wanting to surprise us? Are we open to the possibility?

Communion on Transfiguration Sunday. When we celebrate Communion on Transfiguration Sunday, we are invited to think about the unexpected, the mysterious. The disciples had an experience of Jesus they hadn't expected, couldn't have expected. They were alternately dazzled, astounded, babbling, terrified, confused, awed and, ultimately, silent. They were so thunderstruck they couldn't find words for the experience.

They had seen Jesus shine with the same light that had reflected from Moses' face when he spoke with God on Mount Sinai. They had seen him converse with the great religious leaders and teachers from the past. They had seen and felt the cloud, the presence of God, enfold them and proclaim Jesus the chosen Son of God, more important to listen to than Moses or Elijah. All this was part of the nature of Jesus, but they hadn't seen it so clearly before.

According to 2 Corinthians, in the same way that Moses put a veil over his face so that people couldn't see God's glory, we have a veil over our minds regarding understanding God. But in Christ the veil is removed. We can't penetrate it by ourselves. We need Christ to remove it for us, to open our eyes, to show us things beyond our limited knowledge of reality. When we do that, we begin to get glimpses of God's glory and to be transformed, to be shaped more and more like Christ.

Our experiences, our glimpses won't be as grand as those of the three disciples on the mountaintop, but when we give ourselves to Christ, we do find the veil being pulled back. Sometimes in big ways, most often in small ones, we have experiences that reveal a depth of reality we haven't seen before. We encounter and understand God, Jesus, another person or ourselves in a new way—and it changes us. And each new encounter or understanding changes us, opens us—transforms us—little by little, as Paul says, "from one degree of glory to another" into the body of Christ we were created to be.

The essence of Jesus didn't change on that mountain; it was the disciples who were transformed as they understood Jesus in a new way. How is God wanting to surprise us? Are we open to the possibility? Where do we feel resistance? What is holding us back?

Marcus Smucker explains that God's desire for our lives is to transform us into the likeness of God's own image, but "we choose how much we will allow God to shape us." God can shape and form us through all kinds of life experiences. Communion can be one of them. Just as Jesus did with his disciples, he invites us to receive him. Can we open ourselves to the presence of Christ? To the richness of the Lord's Table? To the possibility of meeting Christ and understanding him in a new way? Can we open ourselves and allow God to shape us? Are we willing to be transformed?

Come to the table.

Pat Shaver is a member of Seattle Mennonite Church. This article is based on a sermon she gave there.

Correction: David A. Shank, author of "... and the Medicines" (Aug. 7) is a member of Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship in Goshen, Ind.

A test of unity

Three pastors reflect on Communion practices.

Ron Adams, East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Our practice at East Chestnut Street is to celebrate Communion five to six times per year. On World Communion Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Palm Sunday, we gather at the Lord's Table. The remaining observances are not attached to a specific event or liturgical season.

Our Communion service is open to all baptized followers of Jesus. At East Chestnut Street, baptism is the deciding factor for participation, not church membership or denominational affiliation. We typically provide a children's "element," crackers or grapes, as a way of habituating our children to this central ritual. We want them to get used to making the walk to the Table.

Sometimes I feel at odds with our practice. I prefer more frequent Communion. Celebrating every time we meet would not seem too much to me. That desire springs from my belief that Christ is at work in the ritual and that it is therefore a grace-filled and grace-providing act. I often feel out of sync with our Mennonite emphasis on human action and lesser attention to what the Spirit does to and for us in Communion.

At times it seems too restrictive to limit participation to the baptized. On occasion I have removed that limit and invited all followers of Jesus, including those taking their first steps, to join the celebration. While that move has been welcomed by some, it has raised questions for others, especially those with children too young for baptism. Recognizing the discomfort created by my occasional "breaking of the rules," I have gladly returned to the more traditional invitation. And I have come to see the implicit theology in the restriction. We Mennonites naturally invite everyone to come and eat. We don't invite everyone to come and die, at least not before providing some significant instruction.

Our observance takes a variety of shapes, depending on the theme of the worship service. For example, on Palm or Passion Sunday, our focus is on the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins. While the benefits of Jesus' death are apparent and acknowledged, on that day we eat and drink as sinners in need of grace. On other occasions we have emphasized the wonder of life in the body of Christ. The same table, elements and people but two different kinds of celebration.

We have settled on intinction as our primary practice. Baptized followers of Jesus are invited to walk up the aisle to the Table and receive the elements together. While there are a number of reasons for using intinction, for us it is a matter of body life. Separating the elements requires walking forward twice, a hardship for those among us for whom walking has become difficult. The small Communion cups are difficult to use for those whose hands are not steady. Intinction makes participation easier for our sisters and brothers.

We have never had an intentional conversation about Communion and its meaning. Our associate pastor and I have talked and share similar views on its meaning and practice. But our congregation has not spent time considering why we do it and what it means.

Our practice has been shaped by the community and its needs, rather than a common understanding of Communion. As pastor, I work with my colleague and our worship teams to provide a ritual act that draws all of us deeper into union with Christ and one another. As a member of a particular body of believers, I temporarily lay my personal questions and opinions aside and simply eat and drink with sisters and brothers. And in the act am blessed.

We Mennonites naturally invite everyone to come and eat. We don't invite everyone to come and die.
—Ron Adams

Continued from page 15

Ray Hurst, Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

When I first came to Community Mennonite 10 years ago, I encountered a particular practice around the Communion Table I could not understand or fully embrace theologically. Yet it was clear to me that the practice of inviting children to the table to receive grapes and crackers instead of the bread and cup was a "tradition" that this "non-traditional" congregation had become attached to.

As I inquired about the history and formation of this practice, I learned that it had emerged primarily out of a concern that the children not feel excluded from the Table. It is important for us to let our children know they are an important part of our congregational life, and we do not want Communion to suggest otherwise.

However, the fact that only baptized Christians could receive the bread and cup did mean there was a difference between these two groups, and I couldn't understand why we were not more honest about that. Either children were included and welcomed to the bread and cup or they were not. Either this meal was reserved for those who had committed their lives to Christ and had symbolized that in baptism or it was not. I couldn't see much biblical basis to support a separate meal of "grapes and crackers" so unbaptized children could feel included.

Though I desired discussion on this issue, I did not want the very symbol of Christian unity to be the occasion for division and animosity.
—Ray Hurst

Though I desired discussion on this issue, I did not want the very symbol of Christian unity to be the occasion for division and animosity. Further, a discussion about Communion would certainly go beyond the practice of "grapes and crackers." It would create a more fundamental discussion about Communion—what it means and who is invited to the Table. How open is Communion? How do leaders "shake the foundations" and not destroy the congregation, especially in a congregation with a certain skittishness about pastoral leadership being too directive?

About three years ago, I discussed my concerns with our pastoral team and received support for exploring the issue further in our congregation. Later an intern from Eastern Mennonite Seminary taught a four-month adult Sunday school class on Communion, exploring its history, theology, various practices and meanings across denominations, and our understanding and practice in Mennonite Church USA. Though the class was well attended, it did not inspire further conversations.

In the next year I asked young adults about their experience of Communion. I learned the ritual had little meaning for many of them. The pastoral team suggested I gather an ad hoc group of young adults, theologians and other interested people to examine the meaning and practice of Communion in our congregation. We met for six months and explored much of the same territory the Sunday school class had a year earlier.

When we found we were all over the map in our opinions, the group suggested a "theological speakeasy"—a time for the whole congregation to gather and offer their perspectives but without pressure to make a congregational decision. We invited Eastern Mennonite Seminary professor Sara Wenger Shenk to give a brief history of the meaning and practice of Communion and to describe the breadth of expression in churches today. We had excellent attendance and a lively discussion, but again we found we were all over the map in our opinions. From that meeting, however, it became clear that for most of us, keeping Communion for baptized members only was important. And many parents affirmed dropping the grapes and crackers ritual in favor of offering a blessing from the pastors instead.

Our theological speakeasy proved an excellent way to hear the diverse voices among us and to begin conversation about a core ritual in the life of our congregation. Our pastoral team listened carefully to the comments and formulated "words of invitation" for Communion, which the congregation later affirmed and which we continue to use when we gather at the Table. Participation in Communion is still reserved for the baptized, though I would like to see this opened more broadly to "all those who thirst for God" (putting more emphasis on a current desire than a past event). But we have begun an important conversation on a theological belief and practice, and we have not polarized the congregation. For this I am thankful. Now that we've put this issue "on the table," it continues to ferment. I believe we will eventually have further discussions.

Dee Birkey

Nina B. Lanctot, Florence Church of the Brethren/Mennonite, Constantine, Mich.

When I was called to become pastor at Florence two years ago, I wanted to tend Communion in a way that honored both Church of the Brethren and Mennonite sensibilities in this jointly affiliated congregation. The chair of the worship committee told me Communion was understood as "the Lord's Table" and that all were welcome, including children. But as we celebrated Communion in a variety of ways at Florence, I heard a range of concerns—from those who wanted a wider welcome and those who felt we should invite only the baptized to the Table. Those with differing views were surprised to hear of the views of others.

What to do? Here are some steps our congregation has taken in the last year.

Worship committee conversations: The worship committee urged me to gather those with differing views for a conversation and to preach about Communion. We included this emphasis in a worship series, "Becoming Bread" (based on worship resources in the summer 2006 issue of *Leader*).

Kitchen table conversations: I hosted a kitchen table conversation between two of the strongest voices of disagreement and myself, starting with telling stories about how each of us learned about Communion in our growing-up years.

Congregational meeting: The worship committee organized a congregational meeting with three parts: small group conversations, an opinion continuum and discernment of a decision.

The meeting included a review of key Scriptures related to Communion and a summary of Brethren and Mennonite tradition. In small groups (prearranged to include a variety of backgrounds), we told stories about how we learned about Communion. We shared our convictions and feelings about who is welcome at the table.

After this, we formed three lines of continuums and talked to each other about our experiences, convictions and differences, depending on where we stood. Our purpose was to understand the range of experiences and convictions in the congregation. This range included the following:

1. "Communion was very meaningful to me as a young person." "Communion was a negative experience for me as a young person."
2. "Communion is mostly about my relationship with God." "Communion is mostly about my relationship with people."
3. Who is welcome at Communion? This was the most difficult conversation. It ranged from "only baptized active participants in Florence Church" to "anyone."

While the majority of members were on the extreme pole of anyone is welcome, some voiced a concern for preparation and reverence in the ritual as well as the need for a strong Christ focus. We reached a consensus that our invitation to the Table be as follows: "This is the Lord's Table. All who want to follow Jesus are welcome." We agreed we want a reverent atmosphere for Communion. Children and youth would be educated along with the whole congregation about the meaning of Communion. Guests would be welcome at the Table. We would receive the bread and cup in two separate circles so that those who might not want to participate could do so without being left alone in the pews. We decided to err on the side of grace and leave it to God to move in the hearts of those coming to the Lord's Table.

We further agreed to practice Communion on Sunday morning in this way and to reflect upon it together at our next congregational meeting. We weren't sure what this Sunday morning practice would mean for the way we share the Love Feast, the Brethren's most "high church" ritual, on Maundy Thursday evening. We agreed to return to the question of Love Feast practices during Lent.

Post-meeting reflections: A few people with strong convictions about baptism did not feel free to speak at the congregational meeting, since children and youth were present. They felt it would have been hurtful to the young ones to hear there may be reasons not to include them. Some folks preferred to maintain the Love Feast as a baptism renewal Communion and an adult-oriented event. As pastor, I advocated we consider Communion reflected in "many tables" and that the more private service of Love Feast be such an opportunity for Communion for the baptized.

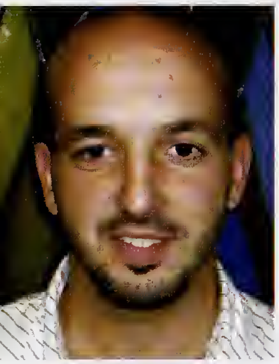
This process has moved me to affirm the wide welcome of Sunday morning Communion. At the last two Communion services, I have welcomed joyfully those who want to follow Jesus to the Lord's Table. And the children and youth have participated with clear intent and reverence.

I also retain a concern that the meaning of baptism as a gift of faith formation and an initiation into adult Christian faith is being lost. Our congregation has grown in our capacity to embrace our conflicting concerns with respect and to engage in face-to-face communication. Finding adequate arenas for minority concerns remains a challenge. I hope this process will help us honestly and humbly face other conflicts together.

We reached a consensus that our invitation to the Table be as follows: "This is the Lord's Table. All who want to follow Jesus are welcome."
—Nina B. Lanctot

Lowell Brown

The grass is greener across the border



Anthony Siegrist is a graduate student in theology at the Toronto School of Theology.

I have no hard data to back it up, no research to support my case, but it seems to me there are many American Mennonites stealing envious sidelong glances at those Anabaptists living quiet lives north of the border. Sure, American Mennonites may give Canadians a hard time over their use of the ambiguous interrogative "eh," but this only masks their secret jealousy. Deep down, many of them would feel more comfortable in a country with a friendly leaf for a flag instead of the inescapable militarism of the stars and strips. Having spent roughly half my life on each side of the border, I find this phenomena stranger than the fact that both Canadians and Americans claim to have invented the game of basketball.

One American friend of mine holds idealistic opinions about the Canadian health-care system. "Everyone's covered," he says. "No one falls through the cracks." Another believes the justice system in Canada is far superior to its American counterpart. Many Mennonites in the United States like Canada's much tamer military; they like its less interventionist foreign policy and its strong gun regulations. As a graduate student in Toronto, I've met Mennonites who have left the United States hoping to raise their families in a culture less violent and with Christians who don't confuse the word "freedom" with "gospel."

This Canada-as-promised-land phenomenon is hardly new. Some Mennonites who were drafted during the Vietnam War jumped the border. Long before that, many Pennsylvania Mennonites worried about the political fallout of the Revolutionary War sold their farms, packed their wagons and pointed their mules north. There is something Anabaptist about this willingness to pick up and move for the sake of one's faith.

A couple of years ago, when I was in the West Bank (Israel/Palestine), someone asked me what I thought Mennonites would do if they were in the position of the Palestinians. "Probably suffer for a few generations and then move on," was my all-too-trite response. Our faith heritage is rife with examples of how to live faithfully in contexts of persecution. It's when we are in positions of power and influence that we become uncomfortable and flounder about ethically, but surely this is not sufficient reason to relocate—to escape the pressure of ethical responsibility.

My wanna-be-Canadian friends seem motivated by two impulses. First, they seem embarrassed by the possibility of being identified with American Evangelicals such as Tim LeHaye, Pat Robertson, James Dobson or Jerry Falwell. These Evangelical leaders sometimes come across as too vitriolic, warmongering and interested in the book of Revelation for the taste of these Mennonites. Second and most importantly, Mennonites are profoundly perplexed by their place in the American empire. Traditional Mennonite theology is of little direct help in understanding what we might do with influence and power. Gone are the days when we could live quietly as silent agrarians hidden amid amber waves of grain—our increasing levels of education, professionalism and urbanization have been the end of that. Oddly enough, some of us are now trying to pull off the same peculiar trick in the corporate landscape by pretending to be "simple business people." Others of us harbor silent dreams of new, less complicated Canadian existence.

But Canada is no promised land—no nation state is. Canada is roughly equivalent in population and GDP to California but does have problems. Mennonites in Canada struggle equally with practicing their faith in a complicated world. To my wanna-be-Canadian friends I can only remind them that no nation-state can bring about the kingdom of God. We must not be fooled into believing the modern myth that the nation-state can save humanity from itself. My friends are right to recognize that America is not the world's savior, but they are wrong to think that the question can be avoided by living in a less powerful country. There is only one Savior of the world, the God revealed to us as Jesus of Nazareth. We provide the greatest possible service to a troubled world when we live faithfully to the new political economy that is the kingdom of God. We can do nothing better than to work for justice and mercy while always being ready to provide an explanation for our hope.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Healthy bodies and stewardship**—Doug Hochstetler
- **The deadly sin of lust**—Steve Thomas

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

AMIGOS increases its fund-raising goal

The committee hopes to raise $150,000 for Global Youth Summit attendees.

Photo provided

AMIGOS committee (from left)—Elina Ciptadi, Sarah Thompson, Amandus Reimer, Barbara Kaercher and Khohlwani Moyo—plan the Global Youth Summit for Paraguay 2009.

AMIGOS, Mennonite World Conference's global youth committee, has increased its fund-raising goal from $100,000 to $150,000 to sponsor young people around the world to come to the Global Youth Summit (GYS) 2009—held in conjunction with MWC's Paraguay 2009.

AMIGOS has received $79,000, as of the end of July.

Based on the fund-raising standings, AMIGOS decided to increase the goal at the MWC executive committee meetings in early August.

"We are grateful for the support we have been getting from various institutions and individuals," says Elina Ciptadi, AMIGOS chairperson and Asia representative. "We have a good mix of people participating in funds. We have young people and adult supporters, as well as individual and institutional donors."

The funds will also be used to cover the AMIGOS and national planning committee's expenses from 2007 to 2009. The national planning committee is the Paraguay-based team preparing for GYS.

AMIGOS was established in 2004 to maintain and build on the momentum arising from GYS 2003. The committee consists of one representative from each of the five continental regions.

Sarah Thompson, AMIGOS secretary and North America representative, says they hope to raise the majority of the funds ($125,000 out of the $150,000) in North America—acknowledging that the church in North America controls 95 percent of Mennonite-Anabaptist monetary resources worldwide.

One of the fund-raising efforts, the Challenge Fund, started when MCC donated $50,000 in early 2007, Thompson says.

To raise the additional funds, AMIGOS will work to contact youth groups and young adult groups across the United States and Canada, inviting them to make contributions (anything from $50 to $1,000) to match the Challenge Fund and raise $100,000.

In March 2006, they received a $2,000 commitment from a young professional.

A second means of fund-raising is through BikeMovement, in which Thompson was a participant during the summer 2006 trip.

"This independently conceived project helped raise nearly $23,000," Thompson says. The second BikeMovement in Asia continues to raise funds.

Globally, AMIGOS is encouraging individuals or institutions to sponsor a delegate to the upcoming Global Youth Summit.

"We also want to promote the Global Youth Summit to potential delegates and participants early, encouraging them to look forward to what God has in store for them in Paraguay and to plan financially to partially fund their own trip," Ciptadi says.

About 200 young people self-funded their trips to the first Global Youth Summit held in Zimbabwe in 2003.

MWC raised enough money for the event and to subsidize 15 delegates from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

"We believe we can inspire young people to do so for Paraguay if we promote it earlier," Ciptadi says. "We have also seen that communication is key. When people understand what AMIGOS is and what the GYS can do in shaping Mennonite young leaders, they are eager to help. … We plan to intensify dialogue, publicity, news articles relating to AMIGOS, and youth and young adult issues in the coming months."

When people understand what AMIGOS is and what the GYS can do in shaping Mennonite young leaders, they are eager to help. —Elina Ciptadi

"Service: Live the Difference" will be the main theme for the upcoming Global Youth Summit.

Ciptadi says she receives positive feedback when she tells people about AMIGOS, and many church leaders have expressed that they "now understand some youth issues they were unaware of."

She says these issues include communication gaps between the youth and church leaders, youth leaving the church because they don't think the church understands and addresses real-life issues they face, such as unemployment, access to education and individualism.

Now the challenge lies in taking this positive feedback about the ongoing dialogue between church leaders and their local youth so that these issues are addressed at church and global levels, Ciptadi says.

"This is a big goal, but through our network of contact people and future GYS participants we hope to plant seeds of sustainable intergenerational dialogue," she says.—*Anna Groff*

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org.

ONLINE

Koinonia Delegation visits Zimbabwe

The eight-member group represents global Anabaptist-related churches.

An eight-member Koinonia Delegation representing global Anabaptist-related churches visited Zimbabwe Aug. 16-29.

The team's purpose was to learn, listen and encourage Mennonite World Conference (MWC) member churches in Zimbabwe.

Larry Miller, MWC general secretary, said in his closing remarks at the 2003 global assembly in Bulawayo, "We will not forget you." Now that promise has moved to action.

People in Zimbabwe continue to suffer due to severe food and fuel shortages, lack of medical services, the exodus of professionals, record high inflation and unemployment, and political tension.

Pakisa Tshimika, MWC associate general secretary, led the delegation.

While the delegation's primary purpose was to show support rather than finances, this first delegation carried a gift of $15,000 from the global church.

Leaders of the Brethren in Christ Church (BICC) in Zimbabwe will discern how best to use the money in consultation with Tshimika so that legal requirements in the United States and Canada can be met.

The Koinonia Delegation was international, reflecting the composition and the voice of the global MWC family of faith. The team was made up of people with various skills, representing their region but not their individual churches, conferences or countries.

They led workshops on leadership training, peacemaking and HIV/AIDS in the church, as requested by the Zimbabwe BICC, and visited congregations, institutions and individuals.

They participated in the annual national assembly of the Zimbabwe BICC Aug. 22-26.

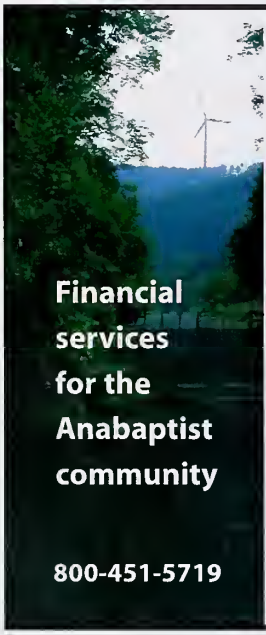
In addition to Tshimika, who was born in Congo but now lives in California, the team included Beatriz Barrios, a pastor from Uruguay; Barbara Kaercher, a nurse from Germany who also represented AMIGOS, the MWC youth and young adult group; Mesach Krisetya, a professor at the Satya Wacana Christian University in Salatiga, Indonesia; Pascal Kulungu, a Mennonite Brethren leader in the Democratic Republic of Congo; John Byers, a retired BICC pastor and bishop from Mount Joy, Pa.; and Dan Nighswander and Yvonne Snider Nighswander, Canadians now serving in South Africa with Mennonite Church Canada Witness through Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission.

All participants attended Assembly 14 in Bulawayo in 2003. Koinonia delegations were proposed and approved by the MWC General Council at the miniassembly in California in 2006. Other delegations are expected in the future.

The delegation gathered for orientation in Johannesburg, South Africa, on Aug. 16—*Ferne Burkhardt of Mennonite World Conference*

Members of the Koinonia Delegation to Zimbabwe:

- **Pakisa Tshimika, Mennonite World Conference associate general secretary**
- **Beatriz Barrios of Uruguay**
- **Barbara Kaercher of Germany**
- **Mesach Krisetya of Indonesia**
- **Pascal Kulungu of the Democratic Republic of Congo**
- **John Byers of Pennsylvania**
- **Dan Nighswander and Yvonne Snider Nighswander, Canadians now serving in South Africa**



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Controversial concert unites churches

Sharon Brubaker works with Christian Lithuanian churches during conflict.

A February concert by controversial 2006 Eurovision winners, "Lordi," at LCC International University (previously known as Lithuania Christian College) in Klaipeda, Lithuania, sparked nationwide protests from religious communities and threatened to damage the positive reputation it gained since its founding in 1991.

However, Sharon Brubaker, a worker with Eastern Mennonite Missions, says God brought something good out of it.

As chaplain at LCCIU, Brubaker fielded angry calls such as, "If you are a Christian college, why are you allowing such an evil group to perform on campus?"

She says the Finnish singers are suspected by some locals because during their performances they wear masks some consider Satanic.

Many Christians joined forces in a petition to stop the concert, though not all were in agreement. Newspapers ran articles covering the local reaction to the concert. LCCIU attempted to find another venue but did not and were obliged to keep their contract.

Concerned that this was becoming a negative spiritual experience, Brubaker wrote a letter to the campus community urging awareness of spiritual dynamics in the conflict. She joined an ecumenical prayer vigil planned for during the concert.

More than 100 people gathered for the vigil led by a Franciscan brother and a Pentecostal worship team. The group included clergy and laity from the Pentecostal, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Free Christian, Baptist and Lutheran churches.

Born in the dawn of the post-Communist era, LCCIU draws its 600 students from both religious and nonreligious backgrounds. Five years ago, when Brubaker came on as chaplain, she began building relationships with local pastors, hoping to facilitate ecumenical prayer and worship and to plan for a Christian youth convention.

Since the prayer vigil, Brubaker has seen a new desire for unity in the small Lithuanian Christian community. She has offered LCCIU, a neutral site, for joint prayer, worship and planning meetings.

"Many of our students come from secular, atheistic backgrounds," says Brubaker. "They find the multidenominational maze confusing. It helps students find Christianity attractive when they see all of us working together."—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

Students find the multidenominational maze confusing. It helps students find Christianity attractive when they see all of us working together. —Sharon Brubaker

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– MATTHEW 5:9
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Location encourages interchurch work

God is at work in many ways and through various faith expressions. So believes Larry Wilson, pastor of First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana, Ill.

Some goals can only be accomplished by churches working together.
—Marlene Kropf

More than half of First Mennonite's 136 members have faith beginnings in a dozen or more denominations, including Baptist, Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran and Methodist. Many of the members, according to Wilson, have joined First Mennonite because of its unapologetic emphases on peace and community.

Wilson has heard the church's new members sometimes say, "That's who I was, but now I'm …"

But Wilson says, "This is the leg of the journey you're on right now, and you're walking with us. … But where you've been is also part of your journey. … There's no need to apologize for your earlier experience."

Everyone who joins the church gives the body new ways to understand itself, Wilson says. Several years ago, over a two-year period, congregational members met monthly on Sunday evenings to tell and hear their own faith stories. When new members join, the telling and hearing continues.

Another way First Mennonite addressed the topic of interchurch relations was to offer an adult Sunday school class on ecumenism. Taught last year by one of the church elders, Peter H. Dyck, the class encouraged individuals to share their personal stories.

After using "With the Spirit's Daring: An Interchurch Relations Guide for Local Settings," written by a team of Mennonite Church USA pastors and leaders, Dyck and others at First Mennonite realized that their own congregation often focuses on interchurch activities.

Larry Wilson

"Ecumenism means valuing others. It means that other people's experiences of the Christ are valid and sacred and to be honored," Dyck says.

Since its start in 1964, First Mennonite Church has sought to be a welcoming presence within the community.

Location is an important element for a church to broaden its global perspective. First Mennonite sits at the corner of a busy intersection and next to the University of Illinois with its 42,000 students from 50 U.S. states and 100 countries.

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First Mennonite brushes shoulders with more than 20 other Christian groups.

Within the sister cities of Champaign and Urbana, First Mennonite brushes shoulders with more than 20 Christian denominations and groups, including Korean and other Asian churches.

First Mennonite members built a Habitat for Humanity house and participated in joint worship services with the Community United Church of Christ congregation. Members from First often plan peace and justice activities with Quakers or Catholics.

"This is a lively, urban church," says Marlene Kropf, denominational minister for the Congregational and Ministerial Leadership team of Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership.

The benefit of interchurch relations, says Kropf, is that congregations like First Mennonite who befriend other churches are enriched by a wider vision of Christ's church.

"Some goals can only be accomplished by churches working together," Kropf says. "Engaging effectively in interchurch relations also requires a certain comfort with our own identity and a confidence in our capacity to reach across boundaries."

After 9/11, First Mennonite's relations with Muslims at the mosque a block away came to the fore. In spite of public criticism of Muslims, the Mennonites practiced the acceptance of others that Jesus taught.

Friendships developed. Mennonite youth and adults visited the Central Illinois Mosque and Islamic Center. Muslims visited First Mennonite.

"Some Turkish grad students from the mosque came to our church to observe our children's Sunday school classes, wanting to see how the teachers related to the kids," Wilson says.

Before the visit, teachers at the church questioned what they should teach that Sunday. Wilson counseled them to use the lessons outlined in the curriculum.

"The Turkish students didn't expect us to change what we were teaching," he says.

Back and forth went the Christian-Muslim dialogue as Wilson and congregational members occasionally appeared on panel discussions on the topic.

Last fall, David W. Shenk, global consultant for Eastern Mennonite Missions, spoke at the mosque in a series of meetings for Mennonites and Muslims.

The sessions also included a speaker from the mosque talking at First.

Earlier this summer, Larry Wilson, his wife and another couple from First Mennonite spent 10 days in Turkey, invited and hosted by several Turkish students they had befriended at the mosque down the street.

A chaplain at the Catholic hospital in Urbana, Dyck describes First Mennonite as a congregation that is exposed to variety and diversity in religious expression.

Dyck believes that churches should be able to articulate how and why diversity is good and be able to communicate that plainly.

Discussions about diversity need to happen within the Mennonite church, Dyck says, because individuals and congregations can think of themselves as self-sufficient.

"We need to know how to relate with someone who believes like we do but perhaps doesn't practice the belief exactly like we do," Dyck says.
—June Krehbiel for Mennonite Church USA

**Ecumenism means valuing others. It means that other people's experiences of the Christ are valid and sacred and to be honored.
—Peter H. Dyck**

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Teacher gives children wings of peace

Kathryn Aschliman receives Peace Pitcher award for years of teaching peace.

When she can, Kathryn Aschliman sits at her kitchen table, her still-nimble hands creasing chocolate-colored paper into cranes.

Even in these rare, still moments seated at her kitchen table, her hands remain busy with the work of peace.

At the July national Mennonite convention in San José, Calif., Aschliman received the Peace and Justice Support Network's Peace Pitcher award for her work with children advocating peace.

Valerie Wiedman of the Peace and Justice Support Network of Mennonite Church USA said they chose Aschliman based on what they saw as a lifetime of service as a lay person in the church.

"Peace and justice work isn't her official occupation, but she brings it into whatever she does," Wiedman says.

As a teacher at Goshen (Ind.) College's laboratory kindergarten, Aschliman planted kernels of peace as she led children and prospective teachers in activities to help them grow as peacemakers.

Throughout her career, she has spoken at seminars for parents and teachers, helping them, for example, to choose toys for their children that "are educational and sensitive to our beliefs and peace theology," Vielman says.

Aschliman also started a children's peace library in the college's Good Library and has established the children of peace endowment fund with Mennonite Mission Network.

"This is really wonderful that Mennonite Church USA is giving credence to the importance of children living a life of peace," Aschliman said when receiving the award. "This is worth recognizing."

We must teach about Christ's love and then, as children respond to that love, it will help them choose to live a life of peace, as Jesus did.
—Kathryn Aschliman

Ryan Miller

From left: Dylan Fanfair-Steury, Greta Miller and Genevieve Guedea Carreño listen to Kathryn Aschliman.

Her commitment to peace was heightened in the summer of 1952, when she traveled and worked in war-torn Europe through a college program.

She saw flattened buildings and homes riddled with bullet holes from occupying forces: visible scars of a war that was taking place on a smaller scale at home.

She remembers hearing others threaten to paint her family's barn yellow and withstanding ridicule from people in her hometown because her brothers did not enlist in the army.

"My family believed in pacifism," Aschliman says. "It was foundational to how we related to each other, our community, the church and the world."

Her commitment to a lifestyle of peace continued to grow as she graduated from Goshen College and began a teaching career—both in the classroom and the church—that has continued to this day.

"In the 1980s, I became aware that the church was concerned about 18-year-olds and their response to military service," Aschliman says. "But much happens before the age of 18. We must teach about Christ's love and then, as children respond to that love, it will help them choose to live a life of peace, as Jesus did."

In the late 1990s, she collected stories from teachers and parents about real children learning to live peacefully, published in the book *Growing Toward Peace.*

During a children's time at College Mennonite Church in Goshen a few weeks after receiving the peace pitcher, she showed it to the children.

In it were Dove chocolates with a message inside: "God's call: Be peacemakers."—*Kristine Bowman with Susan Miller Balzer of Mennonite Mission Network*

bechallenged

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Rebecca Drooger
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Rebecca's research on the effects of plant-based estrogen on mice could have implications for broader cancer research. She worked in close consultation with Dr. Roman Miller—a typical model of hands-on research for pre-professional students at EMU.

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Eastern Mennonite University
Harrisonburg, VA

Father-daughter team shares gifts for art

Heisey's work together to create stained-glass windows for Mount Joy church.

Mount Joy Mennonite Church, built a year ago at 320 Musser Road in Mount Joy, Pa., still has its new-church smell.

The spacious colonial brick building has something else new since August.

At the 10:15 a.m. worship service Aug. 12, the congregation celebrated the dedication of a unique piece of stained glass art set into the front wall of the sanctuary.

"This piece," says Joe Sherer, pastor at Mount Joy Mennonite, "shows how a community of people, centered around Jesus, invites individuals, despite their own struggles or brokenness, to use their God-given abilities to bless others."

The striking, dove-emblazoned purple, blue and green cross, installed at the church that weekend, demonstrates the talents of congregant Craig Heisey, 49, and his 19-year-old daughter Katie.

"As my health went down," Heisey says from his wheelchair, "I thought it would never happen."

A graphic artist who grew up in Hershey, Pa., Heisey is a 1979 graduate of the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and worked for nearly a decade as art director of Good Books in Intercourse, Pa.

He made his first stained-glass piece as a gift for his wife, Linda, 26 years ago.

Since then, he's made many stained-glass lamps, stars and candleholders. But the 7½-by-5-foot cross was to be his first window.

Then, in 2004, Heisey began limping when he walked. Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis-like symptoms began to steal both his manual dexterity and his mobility.

The father of four was confined to a wheelchair about the same time the new church opened the doors on its expansive 29-acre campus.

Like the exterior of the church, with its plain glass windows, the interior speaks to traditional Mennonite simplicity.

The gray walls are decorated only with white chair-rail paneling, making the colorful backlit cross shine like a beacon.

"I think we have neglected the visual part of worship for too long," Pastor Sherer says.

The Heiseys, struggling with a father's disability and a younger daughter's mental handicaps, never gave up on their vision.

The oldest daughter, Katie, a sophomore at Bethel College, Mishawaka, Ind., volunteered to spend her summer making her Dad's dream window a reality, working in his stained-glass workshop in the family garage.

When she was a senior at Donegal High School, Mount Joy, Pa., Katie won a national Scholastic Art award for her pottery.

She also started working in the medium of stained glass while in high school.

"I'd been watching Dad for years," Katie says.

I think we have neglected the visual part of worship for too long.—Joe Sherer

"I'd only done small pieces, and wasn't sure I could do something this big. The way it turned out, I couldn't have done it without him, and he couldn't have done it without me," she says.

"I was his hands."—*Marty Crisp of Lancaster Newspapers*

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CALENDAR

Rocky Mountain Mennonite Relief Sale will be held Oct. 20 at the **Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds, Rocky Ford, Colo**.

Special events at **Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.**, Sept. 30, include morning worship with John Paul Lederach and a hymn sing with guest conductor Cynthia Lapp.

Elizabethtown (Pa.) College to host series of events celebrating ***300th anniversary of Church of the Brethren***. Contact the Young Center at 717-361-1470 or visit www.etown.edu/Young Center for more information.

WORKERS

Miller, Daniel Z., was installed as transitional pastor at Clinton Brick Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on Aug. 5.

Ortiz, Jose, ended a term as pastor at Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind., on July 1.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Abrahams, Samuel Will, Aug. 16, to Brent and Pamela Nickel Abrahams, Newton, Kan.

Brinkman, Henry Frederick Thomas, June 10, to Daniel and Elizabeth Schumacher Brinkman, Phoenix, Ariz.

Burkey, Auren "Aurie" Thomas, Aug. 12, to Tom and Jennifer Strebin Burkey, Lincoln, Neb.

Byler, Cole David, July 28, to Seth and Glenda Byler, Gap, Pa.

Gendron, Mason Carl, Aug. 5, to Ronald and Leah Clemmer Gendron, Pennsburg, Pa.

Hanson, Kara Emily, Aug. 10, to Mark and Jennifer Sheeler Hanson, Chambersburg, Pa.

Janzen, Micah Peter, July 23, to Ben and Stephanie Janzen, Kitchener, Ontario.

Landis, Benjamin Jonas, Aug. 9, to David S. and Mary Glick Landis, Harleysville, Pa.

Luecke, Megan Rose, July 31, to Edward and Cinda Detweiler Luecke, Chalfront, Pa.

McGowan, Daniel William, June 12, to Mike and Jen McGowan, Lancaster, Pa.

Nafziger, Morgyn Jean, Aug. 3, to Tim and Jessica Nafziger, Wellman, Iowa.

Rychener, Lindsey Ann, July 18, to Ken and Kristen Rensberger Rychener, Brownstown, Pa.

Sanford, Hayden Maddox, July 20, to Dennis and Tara Hostetler Sanford, Bellefontaine, Ohio.

Schlosser, Alexander Erik, Aug. 17, to Erik and Holly Schlosser, Ephrata, Pa.

Shoemaker, Lydia Jane, Aug. 10, to Joe and Angie Harshberger Shoemaker, Elkhart, Ind.

Stuckey, Simon Dwight, May 10, to Aaron and Rachel Amstutz Stuckey, Fairport, N.Y.

Unruh, Braxton Jay, Aug. 14, to Brandon and Kristi Rosfield Unruh, Newton, Kan.

Yoder, Owen King, Aug. 9, to Lucas and Amy King Yoder, Johnstown, Pa.

MARRIAGES

Adrian/Rust: Randall Adrian, Butterfield, Minn., and Kristi Rust, St. James, Minn., June 23, at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

Boshart/Sitzman: Matthew Boshart, Wood River, Neb., and Rachel Sitzman, Syracuse, Neb., June 2, at Third City Christian, Grand Island, Neb.

Bouwman/Esh: Alexander Bouwman, Woodridge, Ill., and Amanda Esh, Philadelphia, Pa., June 24, at Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia.

Bowman/Miller: Natasha Bowman, Lancaster, Pa., and James Miller, Reinholds, Pa., Aug. 4, at Cameron Estate, Mount Joy, Pa.

Brubacher/Ceres: Anne Brubacher, Boulder, Colo., and Pablo Ceres, Boulder, June 30, at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

Carlson/Koller: Kristen Carlson, Tecumseh, Kan., and Alan Koller, Elyria, Kan., June 2, at Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan.

Durkish/Steckly: Erik Durkish, Harrisville, N.Y., and Danielle Steckly, Croghan, N.Y., Aug. 11, at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville, N.Y.

Grunert/Zehr: Jason Grunert, Croghan, N.Y., and Jennifer Zehr, Croghan, July 28, at Croghan Mennonite Church.

Henderson/Lockridge: Tara Henderson, Stuart's Draft, Va., and Daniel Lockridge, Staunton, Va., Aug. 18, at Lynside Mennonite Church, Lyndhurst, Va.

Heyveldt/Row: Zach Heyveldt, Iowa City, Iowa, and Lindsey Row, Iowa City, July 21, at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City.

Jantzi/Mittan: Crystal Jantzi, Wood River, Neb., and Travis Mittan, Grand Island, Neb., July 21, at Peace Lutheran Church, Grand Island.

Klingelsmith/Rohrs: Lori Klingelsmith, Archbold, Ohio, and Andrew Rohrs, Ridgeville Corners, Ohio, July 21, at Zion Lutheran Church, Ridgeville Corners.

Konrad/Rochelle: Daniel Konrad, Stutzman, Ind., and Gina Rochelle, Rambow, Ind., Aug. 5, in Goshen, Ind.

Miller/Geniesse: Heather Miller, Iowa City, Iowa, and Mike Geniesse, Chicago, Ill., July 3, in Las Vegas, Nev.

Moyer/Pollock: Jason Moyer, Iowa City, Iowa, and Stephanie Pollock, Iowa City, May 5, at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City.

Mullet/Roth: Luke Mullet, Hesston, Kan., and Sarah Roth, Goshen, Ind., Aug. 11, at Camp Mack, Milford, Ind.

Schultz/Siefert: Rebekah Schultz, West Liberty, Ohio, and Jacob Siefert, West Liberty, July 7, at Bethel Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Short/Walther: Brian Short, Wauseon, Ohio, and Ashley Walther, Wapakoneta, Ohio, June 30, at Lima Mennonite Church, Lima, Ohio.

Zehr/Zeller: Adam Zehr, Castorland, N.Y., and Amanda Zeller, Castorland, Aug. 4, at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville, N.Y.

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DEATHS

Bergthold, Arthur F., 96, Reedly, Calif., died Aug. 11. Spouse: Mary Eymann Bergthold (deceased). Parents: Henry and Marie Muller Bergthold. Children: Arthur, Roland; seven grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 18 at First Mennonite Church, Reedly.

Burge, Lynn Ann, 26, Marion, S.D., died Aug. 11 in a mowing accident. Parents: Terry and Brenda Johnson Burge. Siblings: Robert, Brian. Funeral: Aug. 16 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Glick, Aaron S., 85, Quarryville, Pa., died Aug. 13. Spouse: Susie Lapp Glick. Parents: John and Katie Smoker Glick. Children: Samuel L., John V., Kenneth J., Merle E., J. Elvin, Calvin W.; 12 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 17 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Gregory, Nellie L., 79, Orrville, Ohio, died Aug. 10 of injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Parents: Robert A. and Edith Kosier Gregory. Funeral: Aug. 15 at Martins Mennonite Church, Orrville.

Holsinger, Justus G., 96, Hesston, Kan., died Aug. 8. Spouse: Salome A. Fast Holsinger. Parents: Henry S. and Elizabeth Cline Holsinger. Children: Dave, Don, Betty Shenk, Becky Rand; 11 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 18 at Schowalter Villa Chapel, Hesston.

Markley, Naomi B. Freed, 88, Souderton, Pa., died Aug. 4. Spouse: Ephraim B. Markley (deceased). Parents: William and Ida Bergey Freed. Children: Kenneth, Mary Lou Cleaver, Chris Graybeal, Glenn; 11 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 8 at Souderton Mennonite Church.

Hostetler, Ellen M. Taylor, 85, Orrville, Ohio, died Aug. 7. Spouse: Marvin J. Hostetler. Parents: Joseph and Wilda Miller Taylor. Children: Dale, Owen, Faye Overholt, Rita Wenger, Marla Nussbaum, Jane Steiner; 17 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 11 at Orrville Mennonite Church.

Miller, Carley June Erb, 84, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 7. Spouse: Galen R. Miller (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Erma Miller Erb. Children: Scott, Duane, Tillman, Donald, Marla Graber, Gretchen Vasquez; 12 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 15 at the Gathering Place of Evergreen at Greencroft, Goshen.

Miller, Howard D., 78, Lowville, N.Y., died Aug. 4. Spouse: Ruth Anna Jantzi Miller. Parents: Hobert and Blanche Wilkins Nesselrodt. Children: Heidi M. Heinz, Carmeleta M. Beidler, Howard D., Sven E.; nine grandchildren. Memorial service: Aug. 6 at Lowville Mennonite Church.

Myers, Charles W., Sr., 78, Chambersburg, Pa., died Aug. 13 of a heart attack. Spouse: Mary E. Bauman Myers. Parents: William Charles and Goldie Robinson Myers. Children: Carol D. Rosenberry, Darlene F. Rhodes, Charles W., Jr., Don E.; nine grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 18 at Marion Mennonite Church, Chambersburg.

Wenger, Edith V., 88, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 19. Parents: Oscar E. and Bessie P. Heatwole Wenger. Funeral: Aug. 23 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Widrick, Gerald Wilford, 77, Lowville, N.Y. died Aug. 10. Spouse: Betty Anna Roggie Widrick. Parents: Leon and Katherine D. Lehman Widrick. Children: Lynn, Neil, Gail Kogut, Kari Taylor; 11 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 13 at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville.

Yoder, Sylvia Mishler, 94, Archbold, Ohio, died July 27. Spouse: Leo Yoder. Parents: Moses and Catherine Yoder Mishler. Children: Joe, Sheryl Miller, Eileen Myers; six grandchildren; one great-grandson. Funeral: July 29 at Tedrow Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

People today are polarized by many issues: politics, the war in Iraq, stem-cell research, evolution, the definition of marriage, and more. At the heart of the debate is how Christians relate to political power. Can we talk with one another as Christians when we're at odds politically? How shall we follow Jesus in a red and blue world?

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RESOURCES

God and Empire: Jesus Against Rome, Then and Now by John Domini Crossan (HarperSanFrancisco, 2007, $22.95) reveals themes in Scripture about the dangers of empire and power that are especially relevant today, when the United States is the world's lone superpower.

The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide by Warren Carter (Abingdon, 2006, $16) offers a wealth of insight into the political, economic, societal and religious influence of the Roman Empire on first-century followers of Jesus.

Roots and Wings: The Human Journey from a Speck of Stardust to a Spark of God by Margaret Silf (Eerdmans, 2007, $14) invites readers to participate in an age-old conversation about our origins and our destiny. It encourages thought about what it means to become fully human.

Child's View (Mennonite Central Committee, 2007, $15.99) is a series of nine videos now available on one DVD. The series presents the sights and sounds of a typical day in the lives of children from different countries: Bangladesh, Iraq, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, India, Mozambique, Serbia and South Africa.

A Book of Hours: Thomas Merton, edited by Kathleen Deignan (Sorrin Books, 2007, $18.95), is a book of prayers based on Merton's writings. It includes illustrations by John Giuliani.

Close to Home is a series of pamphlets designed to help Christian caregivers help those dealing with addictions, compulsive behaviors, mental disorders, experiences of abuse or other difficult issues. The first three pamphlets—on pornography, spousal abuse and eating disorders—are out. Check www.mph.org/closetohome for more information.

Crossing the Desert: Learning to Let Go, See Clearly and Live Simply by Robert J. Wicks (Sorrin Books, 2007, $18.95) offers a psychological perspective on the early Christian monastic movement of the Desert Fathers and Mothers. His insights on the dynamics of letting go and living freely draw directly on their spiritual wisdom.

Beyond the Law: Living the Sermon on the Mount by Philip K. Clemens (Herald Press, 2007, $13.99) is a layman's guide to discovering how God lives and moves among ordinary people. By focusing on themes of righteousness, community and blessing, Clemens shows how the Sermon on the Mount opens new avenues of discipleship when received not as law but as Jesus' generous welcome to people from all walks of life.

Give Me Eyes: Crossing Borders to the Heart by Todd Drake presents 12 paintings that reflect the experiences of many undocumented immigrants. See www.tdrake.com.

A City Upon a Hill: How the Sermon Changed the Course of American History by Larry Witham (HarperSanFrancisco, 2007, $24.95) shows how from colonial times to the present the sermon has shaped America's self-understanding and been the dynamic medium where America conducts its most important debates.

Christianity and the Social Crisis in the 21st Century: The Classic That Woke Up the Church by Walter Rauschenbusch, edited by Paul Rauschenbusch (HarperSanFrancisco, 2007, $27.95), includes the text of this epoch-making book published 100 years ago and responses to each chapter by current public theologians Tony Campolo, Joan Chittister, James A. Forbes Jr., Stanley Hauerwas, Richard Rorty, Phyllis Trible, Jim Wallis and Cornell West.

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MCC Thrift Shop Network—Souderton Care and Shoppes, Southeastern Pennsylvania. One of the largest MCC thrift shops in the United States, we are seeking a ***full-time executive director*** to supervise the operations of four separate stores: clothing, variety, furniture, Ten Thousand Villages. Position includes the management of a 23,000 sq. ft. facility, five full-time managers, five full-time assistant managers, three part-time administrative people and 10 part-time assistant managers and staff. Must work within the guidelines set up by the board of directors and MCC and have a retail/management background, be a mentoring person and enjoy working with people. Previous thrift shop experience helpful but not required. Please send resumés by U.S. mail only to Keith Heavener, Souderton Care and Share Shoppes, Souderton Center, 785 Route 113, Souderton, PA 18964. Call the main office at 215-723-0315 and leave a message if you have any questions.

Goshen College seeks a director of ***alumni, church and parent relations***. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alberta. This vibrant, multigenerational, urban congregation of approximately 200 members is seeking a ***half-time associate pastor*** with primary responsibilities for youth and young adults. The successful candidate will work with the lead pastor and with other leadership people of the congregation. Some pulpit and spiritual care ministries will also be expected. A seminary degree or a related bachelor's degree that reflects our Anabaptist-Mennonite beliefs and practices is preferred. Starting date is negotiable. For a more detailed job description please visit our Web site at http://edmonton1st.mennonitechurch.ab.ca. Interested applicants should forward questions and resumés to: Wesley Berg, Chair, Second Pastor Search Committee, c/o First Mennonite Church, 3650-91 St., Edmonton, AB, Canada, T6E 6P1; 780-436-3431; wberg@ualberta.ca.

DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

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www.maple-lawn.com

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Doylestown Mennonite Church seeks an energetic person with a passion for youth to provide ***leadership for the spiritual nurture of junior and senior high youth***. This person will seek to expand the existing program and equip/develop both current and new leaders. The goal is to have the youth program participate in the overall vision for the church to be missional and reach into the community. This is a part-time position. Please contact the church office at 215-345-6377 or randy.heacock@doylestown-mc.org for more information by Sept. 20.

Love nature and working with children and adults? Do you have leadership skills you would like to use in a new way? **Camp Friedenswald** is seeking a person to serve as ***outdoor learning assistant*** to start August 2007. This is a voluntary service position with stipend, housing, meals and insurance. Come and join us in the Peaceful Woods. Contact Justin Weaver, 269-476-9744 or justin@friedenswald.org.

Salem Mennonite Church, located near the growing community of Tofield, Alberta. (45 minutes Southeast of Edmonton), is seeking a ***lead pastor*** to minister to our congregation of 125 people. The successful candidate will have previous pastoral experience and/or a bachelor of theology degree or equivalent. Compensation will be commensurate with qualifications. Interested people should forward their resumés to: Carla Fendelet, Secretary, Salem Mennonite Church, Box 56, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0; fax 780-662-0106; email cgfen@telus.net.

South Hutchinson (Kan.) Mennonite Church, a growing, purpose-driven, multisite church, seeks ***full-time associate pastor*** to lead ministry at a second campus. Applicants should posses a love for people, vision for rural community outreach, and a willingness to work within a multi-staff team. Contact Gary Wolfer at gwolfer@gregory1.com or 620-543-2603.

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Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.20 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.

A new modesty movement?

Sara Wenger Shenk is an author and serves as associate dean and associate professor of Christian education at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.

It's fascinating the way time warps after you turn 50. I know they say that what goes around comes around. And it's uncanny, but that's exactly what I'm experiencing in my sixth decade.

I attended a Mennonite high school in the late 1960s and early 1970s that had a strict code of modesty—mostly with the girls in mind. For the first two years I attended, capes were required on our handmade dresses. When women libber's spoke of burning bras, we spoke of cape burnings—throwing off those emblems of oppression forced on us by uptight, undersexed authorities. And each time we walked into the study hall, it was like walking a 30-foot plank. The matron who ruled watched hawkeyed from the back of the room. Did she smile, eager to help? No, her eyes were on our hemlines, ready to pounce the moment she glimpsed a hint of knee showing.

We hated those study hall inquisitions. We hated being sent to the head matron to rip out our hems to cover the offensive knees. But we sure relished tearing up that particular hawkish matron for being prudish and mean.

Rarely do I hear people in leadership commenting on how the way we dress affects our relationships.

Messages about modesty were everywhere in my high school years. We learned (indirectly) that our female bodies were the source of tremendous power to allure, distract and cause others to sin—particularly the men. I think of it now as a community effort to deal with a genie by trying to keep it corked in a bottle. If you keep the cork firmly in the bottle, you never have to deal with the genie—its power for good and ill.

I don't feel I was harmed by my community's emphasis on modest dress. While I didn't like the hawkish types bent on entrapping us, I heard, through wiser mentors, messages that communicated respect for the power of the female body to be beautiful, alluring and, yes, distracting. When a woman in a mini skirt and heavy makeup stood up to lead worship at church, my father made a point of telling me that he didn't appreciate that style of leadership. My mother often said to me, "Beauty is only skin deep." And, "Beauty is as beauty does." I got the message that worship leadership is more than looking good in an alluring dress while standing up front and that beauty is a more complex phenomenon than what one's face and clothes seem to suggest.

While the styles of that particular Mennonite community didn't stay with me (except for those several years in high school) I did learn to carry a principle within—that my body had a certain kind of power and that in order to be respectful of myself and others, I should use it wisely.

Time passes. Any notions of what modesty entails seem to have blown away in the wind. I've watched how women progressively undress themselves. While men's shorts grow longer, women's grow shorter; while men's clothes grow baggier, women's become tighter, with plunging necklines and rising midriffs. And rarely do I hear people in leadership commenting on how the way we dress affects our relationships. Perhaps we're all still recovering from those hawkish study hall matrons. Meanwhile, all hell has broken loose in the porn industry, and sex is as filled with mystique as a lukewarm cup of coffee.

And then time warps. A seminar that dares to talk about modesty at a recent Mennonite convention is filled to the gills and spilling into the hallway. A popular book, *A Return to Modesty* by Wendy Shalit, makes the rounds among the girls at my daughter's high school. And then last month I read in *Newsweek*: "Consider the following style tips for girls: skirts and dresses should fall no more than four fingers above the knee. No tank tops without a sweater or jacket over them. Choose a bra that has a little padding to help disguise when you are cold." These are fashion hints from the Web site of Pure Fashion, a modeling and etiquette program for teen girls whose goal is "to show the public it is possible to be cute, stylish and modest." The article describes a new "modesty movement" that aims to teach young women they don't have to be bad or semiclad, a movement that advocates a return to styles that leave more to the imagination, a modesty that grows from inner empowerment.

My husband and I said farewell to a beloved daughter this week as she left for a year of service with Mennonite Central Committee in Cairo. I've always marveled at how she seemed to take to a comfortable, wholesome modesty like a natural disposition; it took no coaxing from us. She seems perfectly at ease with a laid-back approach to fashion. I honor our daughter's readiness to show respect for the Muslims among whom she will live in Egypt by wearing modest hemlines on her dresses and shirts. She has a grace and dignity that comes from within that I cherish, a quality that doesn't warp with time but sustains women through countless shifts of fashion. TM

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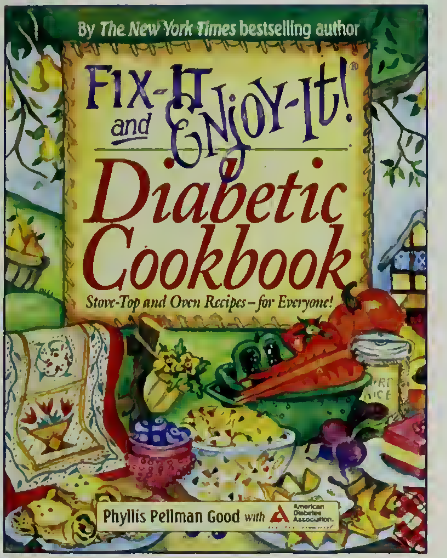
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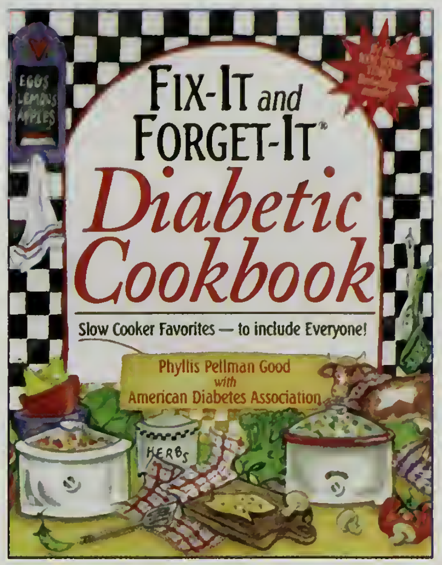
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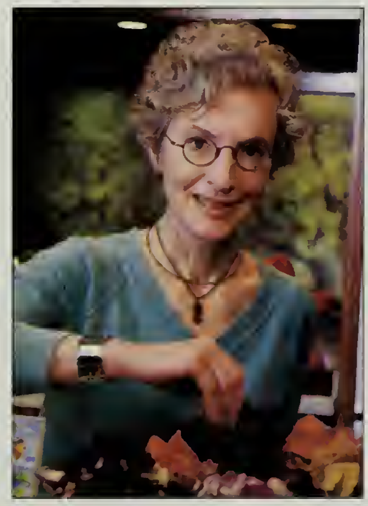

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Gordon Houser

Missional worship

Worship, if we let it, shapes us into the image of the One we worship. That "if we let it" is key because many things in our lives shape us, if we let them.

On the wall of the meetinghouse of my congregation, New Creation Fellowship Church, is our mission statement, which says: "We declare ourselves to be a community that exists to worship God." It goes on to say that our worship calls us to (among other things) "declare the gospel … invite people to a personal faith … build the church … be generous … promote reconciliation … [and finally] participate actively in the worldwide body and mission of Christ."

How and why is worship central to our congregational life? It helps us be in touch with reality, the reality that the Triune God is the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of the world, that we owe our lives and loyalty to the Lord of the Universe.

Meanwhile, the culture in which we live creates alternative realities and calls us to other loyalties. These other realities include such beliefs as

- it's up to me to make sure everything works out for the best, and the best is what's best for me (individualism);
- the more I accumulate and consume, the happier I'll be (consumerism);
- the center of the universe is my nation (nationalism);
- if someone does me harm, I must do them harm to make things right (the myth of redemptive violence).

We do not worship in order to be missional. We are missional as we worship and welcome one another to the Table of the Lord.

You can add others to the list. These competing realities come through media—television, films, advertising—and through the people around us.

Worship becomes a way to resist such beliefs and to be shaped by the reality of God's presence and reign.

Worship then helps us be missional. That word can connote strategy, technique or making things happen on our own. Mennonites love to go out and do things. But being missional begins by listening to God, paying attention to God's work in our world. Only when we are shaped by our worship of God can we share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Worship includes many elements, including thanksgiving, praise, confession, prayer, song, Scripture. These elements help us receive and participate in the love of God and God's people.

Communion is an element of worship often missing in Mennonite worship services. While the majority of Christians around the world see it as the central element of worship, Mennonites tend to neglect it, including it as infrequently as twice per year.

Several articles in this issue ask us to pay attention to Communion. Marlene Kropf (page 8) calls us to practice Communion in a way that celebrates Jesus' resurrection, affirms the nonviolent way Jesus taught, welcomes people and serves the poor. And she notes that the early Anabaptists, like the early church, celebrated Communion as often as they gathered for worship.

Pat Shaver (page 12) writes that in Communion God transforms us, if we are willing. A major part of that willingness is to celebrate Communion regularly, to meet at the Lord's Table and encounter God there, to meet the mystery of Jesus giving his life for us.

At the Table we give thanks (Communion is also called Eucharist, meaning thanksgiving). We are to "give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Such regular thanksgiving helps us live in the reality that God is the one who gives life and calls us to share that life.

Many Mennonites (and others) are hungering for worship, for the eucharistic meal that feeds us with God's love. We long to meet in worship as communities of faith, giving thanks to our common Lord. We want to be shaped by this reality, to be formed into the image of God, who created humanity and all the world as good and longs for that goodness to be restored.

We do not worship in order to be missional. We are missional as we worship and welcome one another to the Table of the Lord.—*gh*

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org.

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Habakkuk, Jesus and God's work

Elaine Bryant is prayer network coordinator for Illinois Mennonite Conference.

A Sunday school lesson and messages from three different ministries based on the book of Habakkuk brought to mind words from that book. Those words are as follows: "Write the vision and make it plain" (2:2 NKJV).

"Vision" is linked to thoughts of two different ways—based on Christ-conformed principles and wisdom—for counteraction to or mitigation of the woes and painful consequences listed in Habakkuk's prophesy.

Habakkuk's prayer (3:2) addresses counteraction and mitigation: "O Lord, revive your work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy."

For years I wondered what "your work" meant. This year, however, the meaning became linked to the words of the Lord Jesus in John 6:29: "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he sent." The context shows Jesus was referring to belief in himself as a work of God.

With the above in mind and in light of the violent, unrighteous and unjust activities in national and world history that are similar to those in Habakkuk's time, a needed prayer today could well be for the Lord God to revive or highlight belief in the Lord Jesus and his teachings as sources for ways to counteract and mitigate woes and painful consequences included in Habakkuk. Praying is one such way. A vision based on the Golden Rule as a practical expression of equity, justice and love for neighbor, including enemies, is another way.

In the vision a majority of governed and governing people affirm and seek to apply principles associated with the Golden Rule, life-enhancing practices and the Preamble of the U.S. Constitution. The Golden Rule ("Do unto others as you would have them do unto you") is recognized by many, as a desirable principle to live by. All who have finished elementary school or been naturalized in the United States have been exposed to the Preamble to the Constitution. Life-enhancing practices, however, can mean different things to different people.

In the Golden Rule Affirming Promoter of Peaceful Life-Enhancing Relationships (GRAPPLER) vision, life-enhancing practices are practices associated with principles consistent with or extensions of the life-enhancing teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. The mission associated with the vision includes seven core affirmations and values that support life enhancement: (1) the Golden Rule, as the basic standard for interpersonal and intergroup actions and communications; (2) the sanctity of life with the pursuit of holistic well-being for all people from conception to death; (3) compassionate economic justice for all people within the United States, its territories and protectorates; (4) the peaceful resolution of intergroup and international conflicts without preemptive death-dealing action; (5) the need for government officials and citizens to seek to live in accordance with standards that embrace personal righteousness and social justice as equally important for society's well-being; (6) the right of citizens to have freedom of choice and expression in regard to a full range of information associated with the potential benefits and consequences related to behavior in a society with the goals stated in the Constitution's Preamble, and (7) the enactment and equitable enforcement of laws that are compatible with the preceding points.

With unified prayer and promotion of the GRAPPLER vision, the Lord's instruction to teach all nations (ethnic groups) what he commanded will be carried out, and many more will be able to experience the "abundant life" he came for us to have.

TheMennonite

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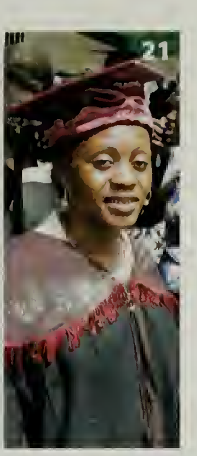
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The legacy of cancer

"Faith for Living and Dying" (Aug. 7) prompts me to write about my husband's and my experience with cancer. After a summer of troublesome symptoms and many diagnostics, my 55-year-old husband was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer in 2003. We learned the full extent of his illness sitting with a radio-oncologist, who said, "We will not be treating you; your cancer has spread to your bones." We were stunned and grief-stricken.

For almost four years now, we have lived with lost hopes and grim prospects. Caleb spends his days against a background of unrelenting pain that is mostly managed with large doses of anti-inflammatory and narcotic drugs.

We could not have managed without the unflagging support we receive almost daily from our friends. This summer we left our home in the country and relocated to a house in town. Our small group at church and many other longtime friends and family helped us move. We have been encouraged and sustained by all these people who have been the embodiment of all the best Christian values.

I would not characterize our experience with cancer as a good thing. Caleb and I, with many others who live with illness or disability, keep moving forward because we have no other option. Our hope is for strength to live through whatever the future brings. Such is the legacy cancer has brought us.—*Bonnie Heppner, Salem, Ore.*

Israel, China and Wal-Mart

The Russians (Soviets) sent troops into Finland shortly before World War II; although defeated, they continued to occupy a piece of that country. The Chinese, at the time the state of Israel was established, invaded Tibet; they haven't left.

A document on a Mennonite Central Committee Web site says 700,000 to 900,000 Palestinians were displaced in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and there should be compensation. No mention is made that a like (or higher) number of Jews were displaced in Arab countries at the same time.

Christians have a 2,000-year history in pointing a finger at the Jews, so an open letter to Mennonite Church USA congregations asking that divestment in Israel be considered is not surprising. To demonstrate our evenhandedness, perhaps prior to Columbus 2009, a letter could be drawn up discouraging purchase of products made in China.

That may result in fewer trips to Wal-Mart, however. And a statement posted on the Web site of Mennonite Mutual Aid (a co-signer of the letter on divestment in Israel) may need to be altered. Its title: "MMA Owns Wal-Mart."—*Paul Hershberger, Goshen, Ind.*

Too concerned with outward appearances

Kudos to Debra Sapp-Yarwood for her excellent article "On Being a Convert" (Aug. 21). She challenges us to think outside our comfort zone and be more sensitive to newcomers in our church.

Based on Sapp-Yarwood's experience, we may be paying lip service the concept of diversity in Mennonite Church USA, but in reality we are not truly receptive to newcomers. Rather than welcoming new members of different backgrounds, we prefer a membership for those who are white and of Swiss, German or Russian backgrounds.

Maybe as Mennonites we are too concerned about the outward appearance, family surnames or family history, which makes new converts uncomfortable in our churches. We need to reread the story of Peter's vision and his subsequent speech and events at the home of Cornelius (Acts 10-11).

Those of us who come from Mennonite families should seek forgiveness for our poor attitudes and insensitivity.—*Galen Dise, Paradise, Pa.*

Health insurance for all

The past 26 years I have worked as a life-health insurance agent, including eight as an MMA [Mennonite Mutual Aid] counselor. Anna Groff's "*Sicko*'s Ups and Downs" (Aug. 21), Tim Jost's book *Health Care at Risk* and Joy Hostetler's Readers Say (June 5) speak to my concerns.

The institutions providing heath care seem to follow the footsteps of consumer-driven, private, for-profit enterprises, evident in moving more toward investments and independence rather than the mutual aid philosophy of interdependence. For example, our church organizations are building retirement facilities that cater only to those wealthy enough to pay their own way. This makes the gap wider between the haves and have-nots.

Pushing for health coverage for leadership is

IN THIS ISSUE

As Mennonites, we believe God is concerned with how we live out our faith in the real world. This means we are to be faithful in all parts of our lives. Doug Hochstetler (page 8) warns that Christians' tendency to value the "soul" as more important than the "body" leads to many problems, including not caring for our bodily health. Ron Flaming (page 12) argues that we should see food as a gift from God that should be shared with all. Steve Thomas (page 14) offers advice on dealing with lust. Find other articles on learning from the weak (page 16), Harry Potter (page 17) and America's debt crisis (page 30).—*Acting editor* starting at the wrong end of the spectrum. What should we be doing to approach this situation like that following World War II and the origin of MMA, mental health centers, medical clinics and hospitals in step with our Anabaptist heritage?

I grew up in a Mennonite church that emphasizes marching to the beat of a different drummer. These recent decisions on health coverage seem dangerously close to the beat of the same drummer as society in general. I hope we can do better than this.—*Luke Drescher, Harrisonburg, Va.*

MARP announcement misleading

The announcement (Sept. 4, page 6) that Jay L. Roth is the third director in the 17-year history of the Mennonite Association of Retired Persons is misleading. Actually the board of MARP was organized in 1981 as the Inter-Mennonite Council on Aging. It appointed my husband, Eldon, and me as directors to open an office in February 1982. We started the publication *Pages* and initiated what has become a 25-year program of activities. In 1990, the MARP name was adopted while Barbara K. Reber was director.—*Martha Graber, North Newton, Kan.*

Poem one of the best

I regard the poem “Prayer Requests at a Mennonite Church” by Todd Davis (Sept. 4) as one of the best I’ve ever seen in *The Mennonite*. I like it so very much; it speaks to me in such wonderfully simple language. In fact, I plan to buy his book *Some Heaven*, from which this poem was reprinted.—*Charles Semones, Harrodsburg, Ky.*

Men are responsible to control themselves

Re material in *The Mennonite* about modesty and sexuality, it is time for men (in the church and outside it) to take responsibility for their thoughts and feelings regarding women. God has and continues to create women beautifully and values and loves them way beyond their outside appearance.

Just because a woman is beautiful does not mean she is a tease, flirt or sex object. Neither does it mean she cannot be strong, intelligent and delightful or that she is solely responsible for modesty. Men, we are responsible to control ourselves regarding women and their beauty.

We are responsible to control our thoughts, whether that woman is walking at a mall, preaching a God-given message, teaching our children’s school or leading our congregation in prayer. Men, stop making excuses and relinquishing your responsibility for self-control.

Men, it is not impossible to control ourselves. God offers us help in our weakness through the cross of Jesus. There is power through the Holy Spirit. But we must live into healthy boundaries. Embrace the total beauty of women the way God does—with sincere love, generous encouragement and perspective.—*Jesse R. Engle, Streetsboro, Ohio*

Not ashamed of the gospel

“Principled Liberalism” (Aug. 7) made me examine what I believe, but we don’t view Christ’s role in the same way.

I agree with the principals and strengths he describes but because I’m a Christian, not because I’m a liberal. Christ didn’t put the world’s labels on people. I don’t call myself liberal or conservative. Those are political terms, and there are candidates in both camps who don’t deserve my vote.

Interdependence, justice, respect, service, nonviolent peace building and community are the means, not the end. I agree with John Roth (July 3); our church has to embrace the gospel. To believe all people are guided by a conscience is naive and implies there aren’t spiritual forces at work around us.

I’m sorry that many liberals feel marginalized in Mennonite Church USA. I pray that our church can promote all the good things Koehn talked about while saying with Paul, “I’m not ashamed of the gospel.”—*Sarah J. Yoder, Middlebury, Ind.*

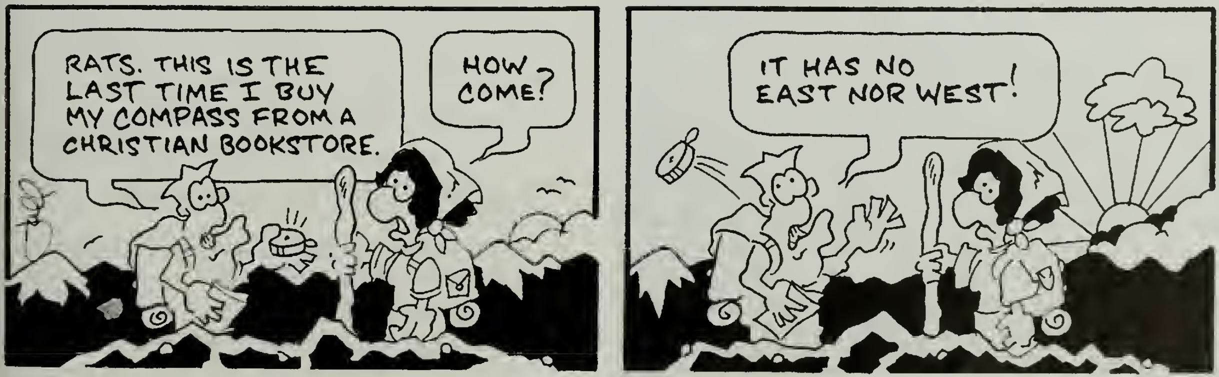
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

My spiritual life affects my physical life (and vice versa) (59 votes):

○ Yes (68%)
○ Sometimes (27%)
○ Unsure (3%)
○ No (2%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius’ Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


RATS. THIS IS THE LAST TIME I BUY MY COMPASS FROM A CHRISTIAN BOOKSTORE.
HOW COME?
IT HAS NO EAST NOR WEST!

IN BRIEF

EMU celebrates 90th year

Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., will weave the theme, "Celebrate the Vision," throughout the year to highlight its 90th year. The celebration began with the erection of light-pole banners around campus featuring the 90th anniversary logo as well as distribution of the 2007-08 calendar, which features historic photos juxtaposed with current photos in similar campus settings.—*EMU*

The turtle effect

A massive new study by Robert Putnam, best known for his 2000 book, *Bowling Alone*, concerns the relationship between racial and ethnic diversity and civic engagement. The results show that the greater the level of diversity in a community, the less people will vote or volunteer, give to charity or work on community projects. "People living in ethnically diverse settings appear to 'hunker down'—that is, to pull in like a turtle," Putnam writes. Some commentators think that the findings undermine arguments for diversity or multiculturalism—a conclusion Putnam feared. Others argue that diversity is a fact of life and that ultimately diversity aids problem solving, since people from different cultures bring different perspectives.—*The Christian Century*

MDS finishes house started at San José 2007

DULAC, La.—The Mennonite Disaster Service house started by volunteers at the Mennonite Church USA convention in San José, Calif., was completed on Aug. 3 in Dulac, La., for the Mac and Lydia Lodrigue family.

The Lodrigue home was completely destroyed by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This new hurricane-resistant panel house will sit on a platform several feet off the ground, protecting it from water damage caused by hurricanes and big storms. The Lodrigues moved in hours after they were given keys at a dedication ceremony.

During the convention, MDS set up a makeshift project site on the parking lot of the San José Convention Center. About 250 convention participants of all ages volunteered for two-and-a-half hour shifts to build panel walls for the new house.—*MDS*

Israeli settlers threaten land, injure activist

HEBRON—Israeli settlers assaulted Palestinian nonviolent activist Issa Amro as he helped harvest hay in the Al Ja'abari fields across from Kiryat Arba settlement on Aug. 31.

Israelis from B'nei Avraham organized the harvest in cooperation with landowner Anan Al Ja'abari. The settlers had attacked the Ja'abari home in the night, smashing a light and threatening the family.

Israeli peace activists and the Palestinian farmers continued to harvest until early afternoon, when most of the activists from B'nei Avraham left to observe Shabbat (Jewish Sabbath) in their homes.—*CPT*

STRENGTH
SPEED KILLS
adidas

Bluffton photo

Bluffton students offer flood relief for community

The Bluffton (Ohio) University football team builds a dike to prevent more flood waters from entering the Shoker Science building. On Aug. 21 the campus and Village of Bluffton awoke to rising flood waters after the area received more than eight inches of rain during the night. The Bluffton campus was activated as a Red Cross shelter, and campus officials prepared for the potential of 150 guests. Throughout the day, students continued to volunteer their time to help the more than 50 guests who came to campus for shelter.—*Bluffton University*

Goshen students to offer relief aid in Peru

GOSHEN, Ind.—A group of Goshen College students left for a Study-Service Term in Peru on Aug. 30.

Peru was struck by a magnitude-8 earthquake on Aug. 15. Duane Stoltzfus and Karen Sherer Stoltzfus, with their daughters Kate and Emily, are leading the unit to Peru.

The Stoltzfuses were already in the country preparing for students to arrive when the disaster struck, but though they felt the two-minute earthquake, they were all safe.

Lima is about 125 miles northwest of the center of destruction of the earthquake—the city of Ica in Peru's southern desert and the nearby port city of Pisco.

The Stoltzfuses have been in touch with people involved in the relief and clean-up efforts, and are looking for possible ways to be of assistance in future months.—*Goshen College*

Bluffton students to Pittsburgh and Ireland

BLUFFTON, Ohio—This fall nine Bluffton University students will participate in the inaugural Pittsburgh Semester program.

The Pittsburgh Semester originated to promote the understanding and practice of Christian vocation through urban immersion and service, academic study and professional internships.

Students will take classes and complete an internship in conjunction with the Pittsburgh Project, a nonprofit community development organization that operates after-school programs, performs free home repairs for those in need and outfits college students for urban service.

In addition, five students will travel to Northern Ireland to live with local families as they attend classes at Magee College of the University of Ulster, Londonderry, and connect with Corrymeela Community, the largest reconciliation group in Northern Ireland.—*Bluffton University*

Churches in Haiti feel Hurricane Dean

SOUDERTON, Pa.—Franconia Mennonite Conference Partner in Mission, Grace Assembly Network, felt the personal impact of Hurricane Dean last week.

Lesly Bertrand, church planter and president of Grace Assembly said some of the hurricane victims are members of Grace Assembly Network. He says one pastor reported that houses near his

Kathi Suderman

ymilk offers nutrition for children in North Korea

is young boy in North Korea drinks soymilk from a
ennonite Central Committee project. MCC is providing 200
ns of soybeans, worth $130,000, to make soymilk for chil-
en in North Korean schools and orphanages. The shipment
intended to alleviate malnutrition among 40,000 children in
rth Korea. According to the World Food Program, more than
hird of North Korean children are chronically malnourished,
using many health problems, such as stunted growth. MCC
partnering with a Canadian organization, First Steps, to pur-
ase the soybeans in China and ship them to North Korea.
ing equipment from First Steps, North Korean schools and
phanages process the soybeans into soymilk and serve it
ily to children.—*MCC*

were destroyed and he lost his entire garden.

Grace Assembly Network consists of 24 congregations, three church plants, seven schools and 30 pastors.

Franconia Conference has partnered with Grace Assembly Network over the last several years in leadership development as the congregations have faced threats and addressed possibilities for ministry and hope.

Grace Assembly also partners with the Hopewell Network of Churches and is connecting with Mennonite World Conference.—*Franconia Mennonite Conference*

BikeMovement DVDs sent to all churches

HARRISONBURG, Va.—A free copy of "BikeMovement the Documentary—A Young Adult Perspective on Church" DVD will be sent to every Mennonite Church USA congregation this fall.

The documentary follows BikeMovement, a group of young adults who rode bicycles across the USA from July 10 to Aug. 25, 2006, as an initiative to engage in open conversation regarding their perspectives on and visions for the church.

The documentary summarizes conversations that took place both within the BikeMovement group and with over 20 Mennonite church communities they visited along the way.

To preview or purchase the DVD, visit http://bikemovement.org/documentary. Order requests can also be made via email at order@bikemovement.org.

All proceeds go to assisting young adults attending the next Mennonite World Conference in Paraguay.—*BikeMovement*

Concert proceeds benefit Western District

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—The Possum Boys, a Mennonite bluegrass band, donated proceeds from their final concert to Western District Conference's Vision 2012 capital campaign. More than 700 people attended the concert.

The donated money goes to the conference's camping ministry, ministerial services and resource library.

"They contacted us," says Dorothy Nickel Friesen, conference minister, "and told us they wanted the proceeds from their final concert to benefit the ministries that had personally touched them over the years."

Band members are Derek Klingenberg, Brett Klingenberg, Bethany Amstutz, Nate Stucky and Grant Klingenberg.

With sales of CDs and t-shirts, the final total donated to the conference is expected to be at least $10,000," says Friesen.—*Western District Conference*

Meadows Mennonite Church ends ministry

CHENOA, Ill.—Over 250 people gathered Aug. 19 at Meadows Mennonite Church to celebrate the congregation's 117 years of ministry and grieve its closing.

Meadows was one of the daughter congregations of "Father" Joseph Stuckey, an Amish bishop in central Illinois who was the leader of the Stuckey Amish (now part of the Central District Conference of Mennonite Church USA).

Meadows hosted the 1911 meeting that organized Congo Inland Mission (now Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission) and the 1919 meeting that organized Mennonite Old People's Home (now Meadows Mennonite Retirement Center).—*Janeen Bertsche Johnson*

—*compiled by Anna Groff*

IN BRIEF

AMBS names new director of enrollment

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary named S. Robert (Bob) Rosa as the new director of enrollment services. Previously Rosa was dean of student development at Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, Ohio, for 12 years. In addition to this role he was senior pastor of Richland Church of the Brethren, Mansfield, Ohio, from 1996 to 2000. He also has served as a hospice chaplain, program director of Toronto Teen Challenge Center, Toronto, Ont., and associate pastor of Bethel Gospel Tabernacle, Hamilton, Ont. Rosa grew up in Toronto, Ont. He holds a Master of Arts in Biblical Studies, a Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Ashland Theological Seminary. Rosa fills a position similar to that held by Regina Shands Stolfzfus until she left AMBS in spring to pursue full-time doctoral studies.—*AMBS*

Correction: The cutline information about upcoming MDS coverage was incorrect in the Sept. 4 issue. It will not run in the Sept. 18 issue but in the Oct. 16 issue.

We are embodied people; our physicality affects our entire being.

Healthy bodies

by Doug Hochstetler

North Americans (in particular, those from the United States) face many obstacles cultivating healthy bodies. Increased technology replaces many forms of manual labor with automation. Our occupations require little movement in order to function. We eat increasingly larger quantities of food and have become what author Eric Schlosser terms a "fast food nation." Largely as a result of these trends, obesity rates have skyrocketed during the past 10 years. The Center for Disease Control estimates that two of every three U.S. adults are either overweight or obese, and childhood obesity figures are staggering as well.

We face serious health implications as a church family as a result of these disturbing trends. As Christians, we are called to stewardship in all areas of life, including our overall health and wellness. While lifestyle choices play a significant role in this process, part of our challenge to cultivate healthy bodies stems from a misunderstanding of the Scripture's view of human nature and the body, which in turn affects our thoughts, language and behavior.

As Christians, we are called to stewardship in all areas of life, including our overall health and wellness.

The Christian church has typically conceptualized human nature in dualistic ways. Put simply, this view holds that humans are made up of two distinct parts—one physical (the body) and one spiritual (the soul or mind). At death, one part decays (the body) and one part remains immortal (the soul). In many ways this conceptualization makes sense. We recognize, for example, that our thoughts do not follow the laws of physics like our bodies. Likewise we are unable to quantify our relationship with God, yet we know it exists. We see this composite view of humans in the Bible as well.

Dualistic ways: When we read the New Testament, we find passages replete with terms that describe who we are in dualistic ways. In Matthew, for example, Jesus says, "the spirit is willing, but the body is weak." In Galatians, Paul writes: "For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh." In Mark, when the disciples ask Jesus about the most important commandment, he replies with a verse from Deuteronomy: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

These dualistic terms stem from the influence of Plato and other Greek philosophers, a powerful paradigm that conflicts with the Hebrew, holistic worldview. New Testament writers used these dualistic words in part to communicate their message to the church and broader culture. Unfortunately we have been influenced by the Greek dualistic positions, which affect how we interpret Scripture.

Inevitably, when we view who we are as composites of body, mind and soul, we make judgments accordingly. Things of "the body" are deemed less important than things of "the soul." Spending time in prayer and worship are of more value than time spent walking or playing sports. Choosing to enter the mission field is viewed as a "more spiritual" vocation than becoming an entrepreneur or artist. On occasion we may even justify our sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy eating by arguing that at least we are focusing on things eternal.

Our dualistic language and thinking also affects the way we view our physical nature. We often see our bodies as external to the "real" person. Our arms and stomachs and feet are somehow less "us" than our intellect or spirit. We believe that who we are is something hidden and invisible.

This view of the body as something external to us leads to other problems, in ways that impact both our body image and our exercise habits. We look at our stomachs, hips, thighs and decide we should lose fat or gain muscle. When flipping through magazines, we compare our bodies with those of models or athletes. Unfortunately more and more people are frustrated with the way they look and develop poor self-images as a result. In a recent *Psychology Today* survey, the majority of respondents reported being dissatisfied with the way they looked.

In terms of exercise, viewing the body as somehow external to the real person leads to unhealthy approaches. We often think of toning up, getting in shape or even sculpting the body. Some health clubs even use the name "Body Shop," similar to a car repair facility. We may wish we could, drop off our legs, hips, stomachs or arms for service, like we do for our automobiles.

and stewardship

Games and sport: Throughout history, the church has remained largely suspicious of bodily pursuits such as play, games and sport. Exercise and sport have been viewed as acceptable but not as important as other, more spiritual pursuits, such as prayer, Bible reading or feeding the poor. While Mennonite schools have gradually accepted and more recently promoted interscholastic and intercollegiate athletic competition, many church members remain skeptical about the ultimate value of sport and exercise and see more worth in activities such as ministry or mission work.

Like many dualisms, viewing who we are as a composite of mind-body-spirit holds a certain truth. It can be helpful to think of ways to be good stewards in all areas of our lives. We need to set aside time for prayer, reflection, small group Bible study—to focus on spiritual things. We need to cultivate our intellectual and physical lives as well. A better approach, however, is a holistic, biblical view of human nature.

This holistic view is predicated on Scripture as

Continued on page 10

This view of the body as something external to us leads to other problems, in ways that impact both our body image and our exercise habits.

Perhaps the strongest indication that our bodies are important is that God sent Jesus to earth in the flesh.

Continued from page 9

understood by the ancient Israelites and most New Testament writers. Rather than using dualistic terms to signify a compartmentalized human nature, Hebrew writings contain terms meant to communicate broader principles. For example, when Jesus said to love God with our heart, soul, mind and strength, the point is to do so with our entire being. We should also consider the translation of Hebrew into English. Our conception of the word "soul" has no Hebrew counterpart; the same is true for our modern use of "mind" and "spirit."

Sinful attitudes: Many Scripture passages are clear that sin is not confined to aspects of "the body." Reinhold Neibuhr notes, "The Bible knows nothing of a good mind and an evil body." Jealousy, contempt, greed and hatred are only a few examples of sinful attitudes representative of "the mind" or "the heart."

Our physical nature is an essential part of who we are as humans. Perhaps the strongest indication that our bodies are important is that God sent Jesus to earth in the flesh. We celebrate Easter because our Lord rose from the grave in bodily form, not as a spirit. Our Creator wants our whole being, including the physical, when we decide to follow Christ. Stewardship is an important part of our Christian walk and includes every aspect of our lives including our embodied nature.

Our lives are more a tapestry than a composite, interwoven in ways difficult to untangle. It is only through reflection that we develop these abstract notions of body, mind and spirit. We approach life as embodied people; this is our place in the world, and our physicality affects our entire being. Walking, for example, affects our thoughts and our approach toward God, ourselves and others. We pray as embodied people; our standing, kneeling or sitting positions affect our prayers. That is part of the beauty of our design as human beings, part of the creative process by which we are blessed.

If our dualistic approach to Scripture is flawed, how might we view our human existence in a healthier, more biblical manner? A first step is to talk about the ways we face life with our entire being. Think about the relationship between the so-called aspects of our lives. For example, how does our prayer life affect our attitudes toward fitness and nutrition? How does our health affect our ability to help others or participate in worship? In what ways do we encounter God while running, playing tennis or walking?

The actual meaning: Besides community dialogue, we can think of our lives in holistic ways. We can adjust our language to reflect this holism, perhaps replacing "Healthy Bodies" classes with ones titled "Wellness through Movement" or "Healthy Living." When we read Scripture passages with dualistic language we can see beyond the terms to the actual meaning, knowing that God desires our entire being rather than several composite components.

With a richer understanding of our humanity, we can exercise not only for weight control but for strength, fitness, to spend time with friends and family and even for the joy of movement. We might fall in love with a particular activity, such as walking or swimming, and experience the gift of movement as a wonderful vehicle from which to explore our world. Finally, we can stop comparing ourselves and the way we look with others. Rather than focusing on how we look, we can consider what our arms and legs and lungs allow us to do—experience the world from our truly blessed, embodied position.

Doug Hochstetler lives in Alburtis, Pa., and is a member of Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield, Pa.

Photographer: Glenda Powers | iStockphoto.com

Every living thing

by Regina Murray Brault

The worker at Casella's dump
pockets my money and heaves
my bag of wilted
lettuce, chicken
bones, coffee
grounds into the pile.

He's seen me here before—
is comfortable confessing that he's lost
his job, confiding that tomorrow
he'll be gone
just like the screaming crow
he once found stuck
between his parlor-screen and window.
With flapping wings
he recreates the bird's escape
once the unhinged screen
was yanked away.

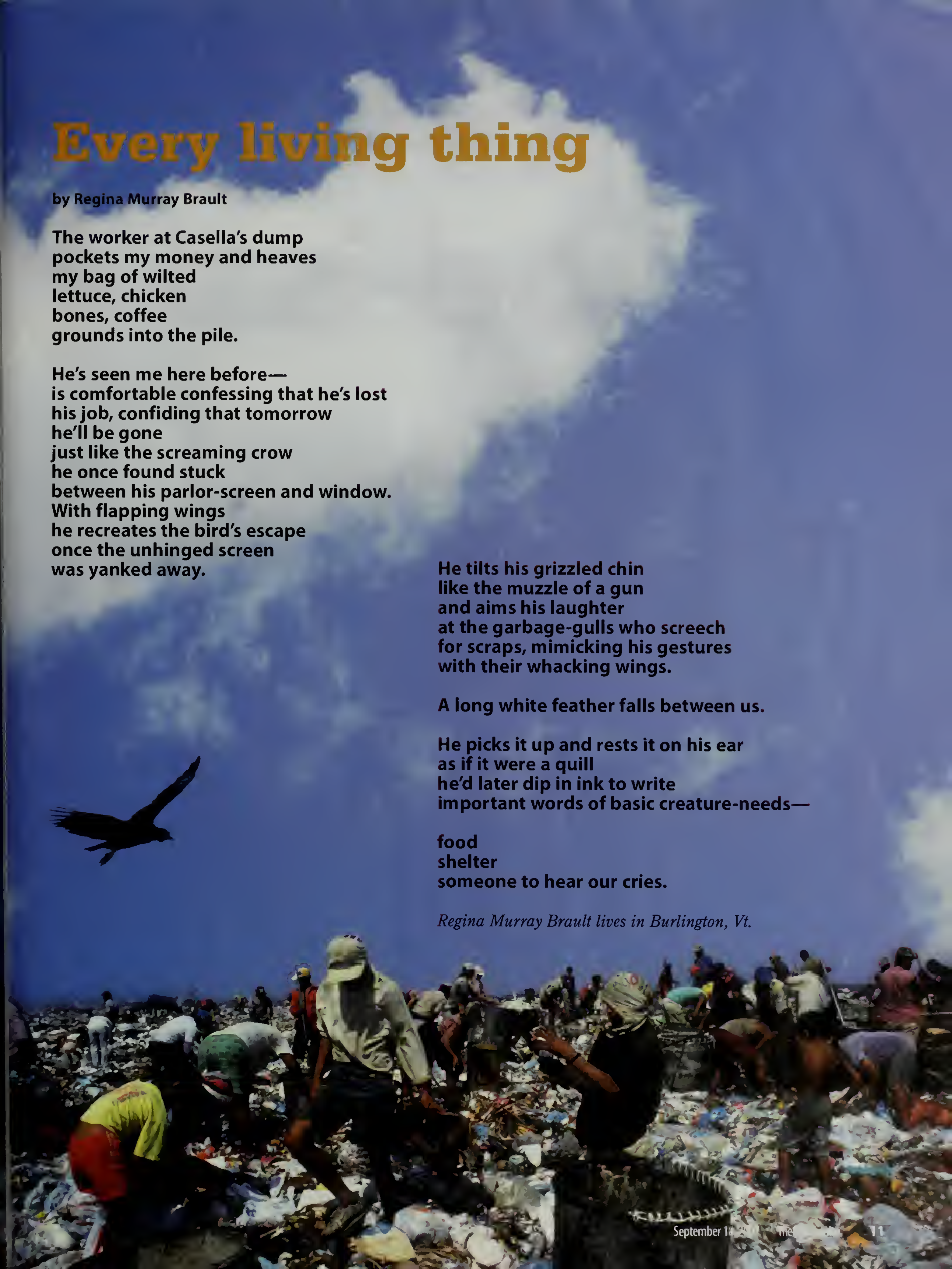
He tilts his grizzled chin
like the muzzle of a gun
and aims his laughter
at the garbage-gulls who screech
for scraps, mimicking his gestures
with their whacking wings.

A long white feather falls between us.

He picks it up and rests it on his ear
as if it were a quill
he'd later dip in ink to write
important words of basic creature-needs—

food
shelter
someone to hear our cries.

Regina Murray Brault lives in Burlington, Vt.



iStockphoto.com

In our concrete, day-to-day experience it seldom comes to our awareness that our food is a gift from God.

Food is a gi

by Ron Flaming

***As the Lord the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.*—1 Kings 17:1**

These are the words of Elijah, a prophet of God who appeared in King Ahab's court one day in Samaria to declare God's displeasure at Ahab's worship of Ba'al.

As the story unfolds, we see that God sends two ravens to bring food to Elijah in the wilderness. Later God provides a never-ending supply of flour and oil to feed Elijah and his hostess throughout the time of drought and famine.

The fact that the food people eat is a gift from God is plain to see in a Bible story like this, set in times of drought and kings who seek their own way instead of God's. But such a story from ancient times seems foreign to us today.

You may protest if I suggest we are like Ahab in our belief about the source of our food. Afterall, he believed that crops grew because of rain sent by the storm god Ba'al. Unlike Ahab, we know correct theology. We know that God sends rain and causes food to grow.

However, concretely speaking, "commonsensically" speaking, we live like Ahab. If I ask you where you get your food, what pops into mind? From our day-to-day experience we know that food comes from a grocery store, a farmer's market or a restaurant. Ask any 3-year-old. If we've taught that child to be politically aware, maybe she will know that food comes from farmers.

We are like Ahab. In our concrete, day-to-day experience it seldom comes to our awareness that our food is a gift from God.

If you are in the habit of praying before every meal, and if you know what you are doing, then you are making a strong symbolic acknowledgment of God's gift of food. But there are two significant barriers in our daily living that act as blinders, making it difficult for us to see that our food is a gift freely given us by Creator God.

One, the food we eat is manufactured in factories, bakeries and dairies or comes to us in trimmed bunches of produce without blemish. The divine source of our food is hidden from us by modes of production, packaging and distribution.

Second, the divine source of our food is hidden from us by a consumer attitude of entitlement. It doesn't matter to us where food comes from because we deserve it; food is our right. Food is something we buy with our hard-earned money.

Food comes to us as a natural result of our hard work. To say food is a gift is to denigrate the efforts of our hard work and that of people in the food industry who labor in the fields, factories and retail sector to provide our food. We do not see food as a gift.

ft

In our Western economy we find it difficult to recognize and treat food as a gift from God that is meant to be regifted.

Even in our efforts to feed the hungry of the world, we speak of food as a "right" for every individual. Given the framework of our Western worldview and socioeconomic system, which places high currency on "individual rights," saying "food is a right" is an effective way to get food to hungry people.

In our economy it is by attributing rights to people that we acknowledge they are valued as human beings. In our economy the highest human values are enshrined as rights. We claim food as a right, and in our best charity we attribute that right to everyone.

We live in our mortal economy, where food has been treated as a weapon, a commodity and a right. We live in our economy and are blinded to God's economy, in which food is a gift.

The truth is that food is a gift from Creator God. People receive food in as much as we work as co-creators with God in the divine economy of Creation. If God provides food so freely, why is there hunger in the world?

There are at least two factors at play in famines of the world today: (1) hunger caused by natural disaster or war, where food is nonexistent or destroyed, as is evident in food shortages in sub-Saharan Africa, and (2) hunger caused by our human economy, as is evident among the hungry in our own community or among poor campesinos in Latin America, who hunger while living in agriculturally productive areas.

One afternoon, as I volunteered at a local food bank, a woman came in looking for food for herself and her two young children. She asked if there were any fresh fruit or vegetables. But all I could do was offer the canned goods in the emergency food package and augment that with some donated bread. As she talked about the need for diapers for their young child, a van pulled into the driveway. There had been a charity fund-raising event and this van was bringing the leftovers. The leftovers included about two dozen full and half-full cases of fruit.

I didn't see any raven's wings or "widow from Zarephath" painted on the sides of that van, but that fruit came at the right time to help this small family.

I saw a type of event stretching all the way back to that widow in the village of Zarephath who shared food with the prophet Elijah. Food is a gift from God that is meant to be regifted. Food is a gift. Food is a gift to be regifted.

Every once in a while, something happens and the reality of God's reign bursts into our awareness. Then we are aware of being citizens of God's Creation economy. The trappings of our society and economy are stripped away. Then we see our daily food for what it is, a gift from God. Those who have eyes to see will see it.

How do we act as creatures of God's economy—an economy based on gifts freely given?

If we follow the example of the man of God and the widow of Zarephath, we will receive our food as a gift from God. We will treat this gift with respect due such a life-giving substance. We will treat it in a manner set by the example of the the Word made flesh. Remember what Jesus did when he ate with his friends. He gave thanks for the food, shared it and ate. Let us go forth and do likewise.

Ron Flaming is a member of Waterloo (Ont.) North Mennonite Church. This article is adapted from a sermon he preached there on Sept. 3, 2006.

People receive food in as much as we work as co-creators with God in the divine economy of Creation.

The deadly sin

Lust degrades God's gift of sex.

by Steve Thomas

God created sexual passion for loving intimacy. The Song of Solomon unveils this passion as a burning, erotic desire between a bride and groom to enjoy each other's body. This passion is so powerful in the poem that we hear a repeated refrain, "Do not arouse or awaken love until it is ready."

There's nothing wrong with this erotic love, unless it turns to lust. And what is lust? A disorder of sexual desire. It's not noticing an attractive person or the natural arousal we feel. Rather it is the carnal craving to gratify one's flesh with that of another. It looks upon a person as a sexual object to use in order to satisfy one's selfish desire.

Lust is the deadly sin that dishonors women and disgraces men. Lust is the deadly sin that defiles minds and destroys marriages. And lust is the deadly sin that degrades God's gift of sex.

Of the seven deadly sins, lust may be the most gender specific.

Of the seven deadly sins, lust may be the most gender specific. While some females struggle with this, the majority of males have a problem with lust, evident in that most boys and men admit to using pornography. So this article speaks mostly to men.

We do well to hear the warning of Proverbs 5. Those who are lured by lust will be ensnared, captured and destroyed. Sound exaggerated? Consider the deadly outcomes of lust: dishonor, financial waste and ruined reputation, to say nothing of degraded women, broken marriages and a spouse's wrath.

The Bible is open about sexual passion and honest about sexual failure. Consider David, Israel's greatest king, a man after God's own heart and composer of inspiring psalms. He was overtaken by his lust for Bathsheba, which led to adultery, pregnancy and a violent coverup.

Like his father, Solomon was brought to ruin by lust. God's wisest king and writer of countless proverbs knew better but didn't do better. Overcome by his lust, his heart turned from God, and this great man fell into ruin, revealing the sway of lust.

Paul understood the tormenting battle between flesh and spirit. Realizing the captivating power of sin, he confessed: "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. … I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:15, 23-24).

With these men I, too, know the overpowering compulsion of lust. Not long ago, I came across a pornographic magazine. I knew better but didn't do better. I entertained the thought of taking a peek, which thickened into desire and desire into passion. Too late. I yielded to lust and lost the battle. As Thomas a Kempis notes in *The Imitation of Christ*, the only time to stop temptation is at first recognition of the thought. After that, if one engages in combat with passion, temptation usually wins.

Browsing offered fleeting satisfaction, and I was left in an emotional stew. I was guilty of spiritual infidelity by looking with lust upon degrading pictures of women. I had self-contempt for committing adultery in my heart. I felt shameful in breaking my vow of chastity and betraying my commitment to honor women as beloved daughters of God. With Paul I felt, "Wretched man that I am!"

I threw that magazine away, lest it ensnare me again. But here's the problem: Pornography is available everywhere in cyberspace. Part of a dark media empire generating more revenue than ABC, CBS and NBC combined, Internet porn is just a click away. And with just a click one is pulled into the pit of cyber porn.

It's absurd what we trade for our sexual craving. Remember how in his hunger Esau traded his inheritance for Jacob's bowl of stew? Noting the power of lust to dominate our will, Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *The Cost of Discipleship* notes that

# of lust

lust "brings the whole body into hell, making us sell our heavenly birthright for a mess of pottage. ... The gains of lust are trivial compared with the loss it brings—you forfeit your body eternally for the momentary pleasure of eye or hand."

Consider the trade a person makes to satisfy the craving of lust with momentary pleasure. Like Esau trading his birthright for a bowl of stew, to gratify our flesh, we trade honor for violation, freedom for bondage, esteem for shame, sexual intimacy for tainted sex, reputation for disrepute.

No one in his right mind would make such a trade. But we're not in our right mind. We're set not on the Spirit but on the flesh in a world saying, "Gratify your desires." In this corrupt culture, we are spiritually seduced by the lord of flesh and taken captive to the Tempter's pit.

How can we overcome this deadly sin and captivating vice? Not by trying to overpower this spirit alone. By ourselves we are powerless against lust. If it can bring down a mighty warrior like David and a wise king like Solomon, it can easily conquer any of us. We need help.

Here's good news: God delivers us from sin and shame. Jesus, who prevailed against temptation, frees us from the grip of lust. And the Spirit empowers us to overcome temptation.

God offers us amazing, freeing, redeeming grace. As he spoke to the woman caught in sexual sin, Jesus says to us, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more." And the Spirit enables us to live a chaste life.

Chastity involves more than keeping your garments on or your zipper up; chastity involves how we look upon each other. Jesus says, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:27-28).

Here's where all men are convicted at some point. I haven't committed adultery, but with every other man I've been guilty of looking upon a woman with lust. By doing so, I have dishonored women, disgraced myself and degraded God's gift.

To recover a sexual life that is free, pure and loving, Jesus takes us to the heart of chastity by calling us to look upon others and ourselves for who we are. We are not objects for lust but people to love.

A word to males: Yes, we will notice a woman's body. But if we gaze upon a woman, look into her eyes to see her not as a to-be-lusted object of desire but a beloved daughter of God.

Men, like Jesus, we need to rely on God's Word and Spirit. We also need each other to keep us honest, share our struggles and receive support. We need to admit our problem to ourselves, to God and to another person. We must break the silence and the grip of our secrets, for there is freeing power in sharing with trusted friends. With God and others we can address our deeper needs and hunger that make us vulnerable to lust.

We need to admit our problem to ourselves, to God and to another person.

By God's grace and with the support of others, we can become Christian men of integrity and honor women as beloved daughters of God.

A word to females: Our corrupt culture tells you to look upon yourself as an object of desire. Resist this. Refuse to let society dictate what you should look like and to dress as game to predatory males. Realize who you are, beholding your beauty as a beloved daughter of God. Refuse anyone who treats you as an object of desire. Find and use your voice to say no to all forms of sexual degradation. And reclaim your body, embracing who God created you to be.

Let us all redeem the gifts of sexual passion and true intimacy that God created.

Steve Thomas is pastor at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.

The clouds parted

God can use the weak to teach the strong.

by Barbara Esch Shisler

The sermon was people, young and old, with intellectual and physical disabilities, inviting the entire congregation to a great feast.

The songs were "This is the Day that the Lord Has Made," "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" and "God is so Good," with motions and clapping.

The Scripture reader identified with the master whose invitation to the feast was disregarded by telling how he had invited a lot of people to a poker party and no one showed up.

The benediction was "Jesus Loves Me."

The bulletin cover was a boat filled with people with light pouring through the clouds, a painting done by a disabled person who testified, "The clouds parted, and your light, oh Lord, shone down upon us."

The Faith and Light community that meets monthly at Perkasie (Pa.) Mennonite Church was leading the worship that Sunday morning. The community of 18 is a tiny part of the worldwide network of Faith and Light that started in 1971, when Jean Vanier organized a pilgrimage to Lourdes for families with developmentally disabled children. The little groups that prayed and planned and traveled together continued after the pilgrimage to meet for worship and fellowship. Eventually they spanned the globe, now numbering more than 1,400.

It is safe to be ourselves. Our weaknesses are held gently in this place, just as our strengths are celebrated.

Faith and Light has a charter statement that all people, even the most disabled, are called to deepen their life in Jesus, to receive the spiritual richness of the church and to be a source of grace and peace for the whole community. The words became a visible and felt reality that Sunday morning. Expressions of appreciation and blessing, warm welcome and gratitude rose from a congregation going through a difficult pastoral transition. What better timing for a group of loving, trusting visitors simply and joyfully to share their faith? Everyone ate the "great feast" of the fellowship meal that followed the spiritual one.

Faith and Light offers specific gifts to those who participate. Welcome and acceptance are high on the list. At our meetings we shout out each person's name in welcome. We take plenty of time to listen to each person's joys and sorrows and pray about them. Friendship is understood, friends of each other and friends of Jesus. We try singing "Getting to Know You," from *The King and I* (a challenge to sing) to tell each other our favorites and our foibles so we will know each other and deepen our friendship. We learn that several people are Beatles' fans and know the songs, so we sing "Hey Jude" and "Eight Days a Week." Accepting and celebrating the rich variety of gifts and the free spirit of giving and receiving is a trademark of Faith and Light meetings. One of the leaders exclaims, "I feel so safe here." It is safe to be ourselves. Our weaknesses are held gently in this place, just as our strengths are celebrated.

Someone said, "Faith and Light is real church." That is a sad statement for the church. It means that a spirit of competition and fear, perfectionism and distrust has moved from a secular culture into the church. It means we in the church cannot openly and freely share our deepest selves without fear of censure and disgrace. We cannot, as happens at Faith and Light, have a "seizure," fall flat and get up again with the help of our brothers and sisters, unembarrassed.

Faith and Light began as a Catholic movement, and most groups today are Catholic. But the leaders have through the years tried to work out an ecumenism that brings unity to all faiths that participate. It has not been easy. Diversity of cultures and beliefs and practices make it a challenge. There are signs of progress. In the printed materials, new words are saying what used to be exclusive. A softening of the barriers is leading to expanding life and growth in the Faith and Light organization.

Our own congregations can change, too. If we take a close look at the way we are as a church and see that our goals of excellence and success are getting in the way of real church, we may want to hear the word from 1 Corinthians. God can use the weak of this world to teach the strong.

Faith and Light communities can show the way.

Barbara Esch Shisler is a member of Perkasie (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Christian lessons from the last Harry Potter novel

Finding Christ in Harry Potter

by Ryan Ahlgrim

Spoiler alert: The following article reveals the ending of the last Harry Potter novel.

On a recent Saturday evening, two children, two teenagers and six adults from my congregation gathered to discuss *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the final book in the popular series. Of all the Harry Potter books, the last one seemed to me to have the most in common with the Christian faith, so I opened our book discussion with the following question: "Did you notice any Christian symbols or message in this book?"

Immediately a 10-year old girl responded, "It's the story of good versus evil but without being overly religious."

"Harry has to sacrifice himself to win," added one of the adults. "He's like Jesus."

"But Harry is just human," another adult pointed out. "He's not divine like Jesus. Harry doesn't directly represent Jesus the way Aslan the lion does in the Narnia stories."

So began our discussion of the possible Christian content of the seventh Harry Potter novel. Over the next hour and a half, group members found several similarities between Jesus and Harry: Both are humble and selfless; both are nonviolent and refuse to kill; both are destined to die as part of a larger plan to defeat evil; both reject the use of supernatural power to avoid death; both go to their deaths willingly and defenseless; both die at the hands of evil; both come back to life; both decisively defeat the power of evil.

In addition to these striking similarities between the way Jesus and Harry defeat evil, the book contains two key quotations from the New Testament: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21) and, "The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26). These two verses are found on tombstones in a cemetery, linking the themes of the novel to a Christian worldview.

Our group debated whether author J.K. Rowling purposely inserted the symbol of the cross into her story for Christian reasons. For instance, when Harry buries a memento of a dead friend under a tree, he marks the spot with a cross. Later, Harry finds in an icy pond a "great silver cross" that turns out to be a special sword necessary for destroying evil. One of the last chapters of the book, which depicts Harry in a heavenly kind of place after he dies, is titled "King's Cross."

Reconciliation with former enemies is also a major theme of this book. Though some enemies perish (usually through their own evil acts), others are redeemed, including some former followers of "the dark lord." Surprisingly, Harry experiences a measure of peace with his bullying stepbrother as well as with his primary peer opponent, Draco Malfoy. The story is largely consistent with the New Testament message of peacemaking and loving one's enemies.

The story is largely consistent with the New Testament message of peacemaking and loving one's enemies.

"But aren't the Harry Potter books about sorcery and witchcraft?" I asked.

The group didn't think so. They pointed out that the book does not depict "real" witchcraft. Instead the world of magic in the Harry Potter books functions as a metaphor for a larger reality than what's visible—a spiritual reality that nurtures faith and hope, friendship and love. It would be disturbing if the Harry Potter books influenced children to pursue occult activities. But if these books point us toward God's kingdom, a reality that is everywhere but often unseen, then we have reason to be grateful for these books.

Ryan Ahlgrim is pastor of First Mennonite Church in Indianapolis.

A debt repayment milestone and challenge

Ron Rempel is executive director of Mennonite Publishing Network.

On Aug. 2, Mennonite Publishing Network made the final payment on long-term debt that stood at $5.1 million five years earlier. The debt is paid.

With principal and interest, the total payout for debt over the past five years has been around $6 million—20 percent from donations, 27 percent from operational earnings, 53 percent from the sale of bookstore assets.

When the final payment was wired, a conference leader sent this note: "What a tremendous accomplishment! (I admit that I did not think it possible.)" This comment provides a small glimpse of the journey that ended in this debt-repayment milestone. The journey continues in the ongoing challenge of nurturing a robust and financially viable publishing ministry.

The credit for this significant accomplishment goes to many people. Thanks to the denominational leaders who formed a publishing transformation team to set overall direction and initiated a variety of emergency measures back in 2001-2002 to keep the publishing program from sliding into insolvency. Invoking a long tradition of mutual aid, they called for a "barn-raising campaign" to help repay the debt.

Further, on behalf of the wider church, they took a considerable risk in backing several large loans used to consolidate debt and repay debenture notes. At the time the loans were announced, I was still editor of *Canadian Mennonite* and expressed editorial concern about encumbering the church with these loans.

Thanks to the many congregations and individuals that contributed to the barn-raising campaign in 2002-2003 and have continued to donate since. Are donations still needed now that long-term debt has been repaid? Yes. The business plan calls for 5 to 6 percent of revenue—about $200,000 in the current year—to come from donations to the resource development fund, which helps pay for the development cost of core church resources that do not fully pay their own way.

Thanks to interim executive directors who implemented new directions and to publishing and bookstore staff who remained resilient in a time of painful restructuring. The fact that operational earnings accounted for 27 percent of overall debt repayment speaks for itself. Amid all the turmoil of change, staff continued to serve with distinction and creativity, both in the stores and in publishing.

Thanks to congregations and individuals that buy curriculum, periodicals and books produced by Mennonite Publishing Network. Unlike some other programs of the church that depend almost solely on donations, the publishing program is funded primarily by sales. Many of our books and other resources sell beyond our denomination. However, the primary test of whether we are doing our job is whether our own churches buy what we publish.

Overall it's exciting to see the strong sales of so many Mennonite Publishing Network materials. For example, given the lower attendance at churchwide assemblies this summer, we assumed that our sales would be lower than at the Charlotte 2005 assembly, which included participants from both Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. However, we were pleased that the combined sales from the two denominational assemblies this summer (one in San José, Calif., and the other in Abbotsford, B.C.) were slightly higher than at Charlotte.

One challenge we face is how to produce Sunday school curriculum in an increasingly diverse church with a declining Sunday school attendance. When an earlier curriculum was released in the early 1990s, it was purchased by 70 percent of congregations. When the new Gather 'Round curriculum was released in the fall of 2006, 40 to 45 percent of congregations in Mennonite Church USA purchased it. Along with other denominational publishers, we are trying to learn what we can do and what the church can do to improve those statistics. Historically, strong curriculum sales have been one cornerstone of a viable publishing program.

Finally, thanks be to God for the publishing mission entrusted to us and for grace and strength to do what was needed in recent years. In the more than 100 years of publishing in our denomination, the past five years have not been the first time our church has worked its way out of debt. May God's wisdom be with us as we apply our best business skills to the mission of publishing resources "that equip the church to experience and share the gospel of Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective." TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **The appeal of cities**—Anna Groff
- **From seeker to leader**—Sheri Hostetter

Building muscles, faith and friendship

Weight lifting outreach provides Miami youth with workouts and community.

A bench press, some dumbbells and a multipurpose exercise machine are the trappings of home for a group of teenagers in Miami.

Three times a week, high-school youth gather at Branches, a faith-based mission organization in Miami that sponsors this gym, for a time of weight lifting that builds both muscle and faith.

Tony Baurichter, the volunteer who developed the weight-lifting outreach to give youth an opportunity to stay off the streets and out of trouble, gets as much energy from the teens as from the rigorous workouts. Baurichter, a member of the Dwell program run by DOOR (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection), infuses the ministry with his own passion for fitness and for youth.

For many youth, Baurichter has become a mentor and trusted adviser. Youth ask questions about God, drugs, dating relationships, education and any number of issues that are close to a teenager's heart, and Baurichter offers them a listening ear, an encouraging voice and an invitation to become active in Bible studies and other aspects of the Branches ministry.

An avid weight lifter himself, Baurichter knew that fitness was important to teenagers and in conversation with other staff members agreed to help develop a workout ministry.

"I always wanted to start lifting weights because I play football and wanted to get stronger, but I never had access to a gym before," says Amos*, 16, a regular at the gym. "And this is not like a regular gym. At other gyms, you have to work by yourself, but here it is easier because they help you learn how to lift."

Baurichter knew that Amos was not alone in his desire to get fit. "High schoolers like to lift weights and be fit. We wanted to use this as a gateway to get kids involved in other aspects of the ministry," he says.

In order to create the gym, Baurichter scoured yard sales and solicited donations from area vendors. He brought the equipment to Branches and converted an old thrift store into a workout room.

The result of Baurichter's sweat and work is a thriving ministry. On any given day when the gym is open, anywhere from eight to 20 teenage boys and girls gather together to exercise and build camaraderie.

"Although you can get a good workout in our small gym, the true purpose of this place is much greater than just improving physical health. Weight lifting is a tool I use to build relationships with the teenagers," Baurichter says.

Conversations with the youth are what keep Baurichter moving ahead. He can recall several important conversations where youth opened up and shared from their personal lives.

Photo provided

A group of Miami teens, part of a weight lifting ministry, gather around DOOR volunteer Tony Baurichter.

Victor, a high school student often on the fringes of activities at Branches, attended a few workouts early on and became hooked on weight lifting. After his introduction to the program, he became a staple in the gym and at a Branches Bible study.

Baurichter sees another important part of his role as pushing youth to persevere. "Most of them don't have much parental involvement and don't have anyone that pushes them to go farther. I challenge them to go beyond their limits—even when it's difficult," says Baurichter.

Teens that have attended the sessions regularly can lift up to 50 percent more than when they began, and many have also chosen to become active participants in the community at Branches.

"At weight lifting, they make you feel welcome. It's fun," says Travois Reddick, 16, a regular lifter. "They invite you in like you're a member of the family."

Although his term with Dwell ended this summer, Baurichter is not planning to leave this family behind. Beginning this fall, he will assume the full-time role of youth and young adult coordinator at Branches.

Dwell is one facet of the DOOR program, a partner to Mennonite Mission Network's Christian Service ministries. Dwell participants are invited to spend a year living in a city with an intentional Christian community while serving at an area nonprofit organization.

Dwell placements are currently available in Atlanta, Denver, Hollywood, Miami and San Antonio.

*Some of the teens quoted asked that their last names not be used in this story.—*Hannah Heinzekehr for Mennonite Mission Network*

The true purpose of this gym is much greater than just improving physical health. Weight lifting is a tool that I use to build relationships with the teenagers. —Tony Baurichter

Faculty named in intercultural program

Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning to transform Goshen campus

Liliana Garcia

Goshen (Ind.) College's Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning (CITL)—funded by a $12.5 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. and announced in October 2006—now has administrative faculty in place for three positions and the building blocks in place for a program aimed at showing how small liberal arts colleges can best serve the rapidly growing Latino population in the United States.

The Center will focus on research, educational access and transforming the learning community at Goshen College.

Liliana Garcia has been named the enrollment counselor, Robert Reyes has been named the research director and Ross Peterson-Veatch has been named the curriculum director. They each began their positions this summer.

Garcia is an enrollment counselor with CITL, with responsibilities for recruiting generally in 20 area high schools and specifically for Latino students from Indiana. Garcia was born in Mexico and raised in northwest Indiana. She has spent the past two years serving as a graduate supervisor in the Indiana University Residence Life Office. Garcia received a master's degree in student affairs administration with a concentration in counseling from Indiana University in 2007.

Reyes is the research director for CITL and professor of sociology. He received a master of divinity degree and a doctorate in marriage and family studies from Fuller Theological Seminary. Originally from San Juan, Puerto Rico, Reyes served for the past 11 years at Messiah College as associate professor of human development and family science and director of the Latino Partnership program.

Robert Reyes

Peterson-Veatch is the director of curriculum, teaching and faculty development for CITL and associate academic dean. He received a bachelor's degree in Spanish and sociology/anthropology from Earlham College and master's and doctoral degrees in folklore from Indiana University. Peterson-Veatch was a faculty member in the Liberal Arts and Management Program at Indiana University, Bloomington, where he taught interdisciplinary courses on the local economy.

Ross Peterson-Veatch

The Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning will help the college prepare a diverse group of graduates through its commitment to transforming the campus.

With greater access for Latino students from the Goshen community and region, an intercultural curriculum and pedagogy and a greater understanding of the changing dynamics in the community, Goshen College hopes to become a national leader in intercultural education.

The search for a project director for CITL continues this fall.

The initiative has already helped provide access to a college education for a group of Latino students to study at Goshen College this year.
—Goshen College

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Scholarship brings graduation in Congo

Congolese woman encouraged to study theology by mentor Sidonie Swana

Leya Mulabo of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), was among the graduates who received a degree in missiology at the annual graduation ceremonies of the Centre Universitaire de Missiologie in Kinshasa on Aug. 25. She is a member of the Congo Mennonite Church.

Mulabo is one of five African women receiving scholarships for theological studies through the African Anabaptist Women Theologian's Committee and Les Amis of Mennonite Women USA. The program is facilitated by Mennonite World Conference (MWC). The graduation speaker was Nzash Lumeya, founder of the school, who is originally from the DRC and living in Fresno, Calif.

Mulabo's mentor, Sidonie Swana, a Congolese member of the African Anabaptist Women Theologians committee, encouraged her to study theology.

Her vision is to pass on the gift she has received by working with young women in the church to build self-esteem and awareness of the needs and opportunities for women in ministry.

Leya Mulabo (center) of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, who graduated from the Centre Universitaire de Missiologie in Kinshasa, stands with her mentor, Sidonie Swana (right) and Pastor Eric Mukambu.

Women in several African countries studying theology or serving in various ministry roles have been meeting for several years. In 2003, at the MWC global assembly in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, they held workshops, addressed the General Council and met with Latin American women. One significant development, as a result of that 2003 gathering, is the relationship between the African Women Theologians and Mennonite Women USA.—*Eleanor Miller of Mennonite World Conference*

Cool Tools for Hot Topics

Some subjects seem too hot for a group to discuss sanely. Not necessarily.

The Little Book of "Cool Tools for Hot Topics"—Group Tools to Facilitate Meetings When Things Are Hot shows how to help people hear each other when they feel like shouting; how to focus on the issues at stake rather than having a war of personalities; how to employ actual practices for better understanding; and how to move a group toward making a decision that all can honestly support.

Cool Tools is rich in anecdotes and practical how-to for any group faced with tension-filled decision-making.

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Dean ruins Mennonite homes in Mexico

Though the closest city escaped catastrophic damage from Hurricane Dean, the storm ravaged the livelihoods of a historic people so isolated that the only hint of modernity comes from the jetliners that fly overhead.

They are not indigenous Mayas. They are Mennonites, 800 descendants of 16th-century European Protestant reformers, who mostly shun the modern world but boarded buses and found shelter from the storm inside the city of Chetumal.

As Dean made its final landfall Aug. 22 near Tuxpan and weakened inland, they inspected their settlement in the Yucatán Peninsula—accessible only by a precarious mud road through an otherwise impenetrable swamp—and confronted this reality: Ninety percent of their homes were destroyed. Their corn crop lay flattened. Their horse-drawn buggies leaned to this side and that, battered beyond repair.

"There's nothing. Now we have nothing left," says Isaac Dick, 27, whose one-room wood-and-tin home near the Caribbean coast imploded as though it were balsa wood and aluminum foil crushed by a child's thumb.

Six hundred miles away, along Mexico's Gulf Coast, Dean restrengthened to Category 2 intensity with 100-mph winds as its core slammed the nation for the final time, making landfall near Tecolutla, 40 miles south-southeast of Tuxpan.

Then it moved inland, weakened and was demoted to a tropical depression.

Widespread flooding and modest damage were reported along the coast, and officials expressed deep concern about the possibility of flash floods and mudslides inland as Dean's still-abundant rain worked through Mexico's mountains.

Floods and landslides in that area killed hundreds in 1999.

Dean's death toll in the Caribbean already stood at 20 before it reached Mexico, rising by seven as Haitian officials reported more death. Thus far, no reports of storm-related death or serious injury have emerged from Mexico.

Along the country's Caribbean coast, where a much stronger version of the storm made its first Mexican landfall, the Quintana Roo state capital of Chetumal escaped catastrophic damage.

Not so in Mahahual, a small, up-and-coming beach resort that thrived mostly on money from the cruise industry and its tourists. Now it's known as the coastal spot first hit by Dean's eye wall and its most powerful, 165-mph winds.

On Aug. 22, authorities allowed business owners and residents back into Mahahual, an hour's

"Working with AAI gave us a sense of clarity that we had a viable campaign plan that could be achieved. Becky was very competent but also very understanding; she was able to work well with all the different personalities involved."

Warren Galvin, Executive Vice President
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Hurricane Dean destroys 90 percent of the homes and flattens the corn crop.

drive from the main highway through a biological preserve.

Even then, the view of the Caribbean was stunning—except on the beach, where it appeared that an invasion fleet had bombarded the white sand.

Rows of tourists shops stood blown out. Three small fishing boats lay entwined in thick trees 200 yards from the beach. At a ruined outdoor market, wind chimes usually sold to tourists still hung, now clinking against the fallen slabs of a tin roof.

"It looks like Iraq," says Jose Rogelio Juarez, 46, who found his gift shop emptied by the winds, with a layer of sand and coconuts inside. "It looks like a beach in here."

The town's fledgling tourist infrastructure was gone, too. The dock for cruise ships suffered extreme damage.

The details were different but the outcome much the same in Salamanca, the 5,000-acre farming settlement of Mennonites seven miles from the nearest paved road.

Their ancestors fled persecution in Holland hundreds of years ago, first to Germany, then Russia, Canada, Chihuahua in Mexico, Belize and finally, four years ago, the swamps of Salamanca.

Mostly blond and light-eyed, they still speak a mix of German and Dutch, travel by horse-drawn cart and use kerosene lamps to light their homes. Few speak Spanish.

Amid the bustle outside the shelters in Chetumal, they were distinguished by their attire—plaid dresses and bonnets for the women; dark trousers, suspenders, long-sleeved shirts and straw caps for the men.

The government provided buses for them, to and from the farms.

But the devastation was amplified by their humble lifestyle. These Mennonites believe modern technology taints their faith.

They do not use running water or electricity. Most learned of the storm from Mexicans who came to buy goods. Tropical storms had brushed Belize in the past, but nothing on the scale of Dean.

Says Jacobo Dick, no relation to Isaac: "I don't even have 50 pesos. Now we have nothing."

Few Mexicans even know of the community. The Mennonite men weren't sure how to ask for government help.

For Isaac Dick, the damage was nearly complete.

Dean reduced his one-room home to a tangled pile of pillows, dolls, blankets and empty Cup-O-Noodles containers. Fortunately, his horse, Dal, survived the storm without injury.

Several months ago, Dick had begun building a cinder block house to replace his one-room home. A tanned father of three with sad blue eyes, he works 12-hour days tending six acres of corn, now uprooted by the storm.

Dean stole the tin roof of the new home, leaving it crushed in the cornfields, Dick says as a blue butterfly lands on his right shoulder. He shoos it away, without smiling.

Houses used to be there. Now they're all gone.—Isaac Dick

He pointed to distant patches of land. "Houses used to be there," he says. "Now they're all gone."

That night, his family would sleep in the usual pitch black of the farmland.

But with no roof overhead.—*David Ovalle and Martin Merzer for the* Miami Herald

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Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) is seeking an individual to represent Mennonite Foundation with a focus on meeting donors' needs through charitable gift planning services and providing support of development activities of Anabaptist denominations, church institutions, and affiliated organizations. Qualified applicants will have a bachelor's degree in an applicable field; prior experience in charitable gift planning and/or estate planning; strong relationship building skills; ability and willingness to travel regionally. For more information about the responsibilities and qualifications of this position, please visit our Web site, www.mma-online.org, and go to "Careers."

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Bethel nursing group provides mentors

National Black Nurses' Association approves first student chapter at Bethel.

WICHITA KS
(KS) BNA

Photo provided

Nikkii Dolce, back, with officers from the Wichita, Kan., chapter of the Black Nurses Association, including president Anniece Berry, right, at the NBNA annual convention in Atlanta in July.

The importance of good mentors can't be overestimated. That was a major motivation behind the formation of a new student group at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., which is the only one of its kind in the country.

At the end of July, Nikkii Dolce, senior nursing major and chair of the Bethel College student chapter of National Black Nurses' Association (NBNA), attended the organization's national conference in Atlanta, traveling with officers from the Wichita, Kan., chapter of NBNA, under whose wing the Bethel group was organized.

That happened a year ago. When Debra Davis, who graduated from Bethel in May with a bachelor's degree in nursing, came as a junior, she says, she and some of her peers "looked around and saw what we wanted wasn't here in terms of [black role models for] leadership and empowerment in the nursing profession."

Thelma Latrice Moses, who also graduated in May with her nursing degree, adds, "We wanted something for minority [nursing] students that would get people actively involved in leadership. We were looking for mentors."

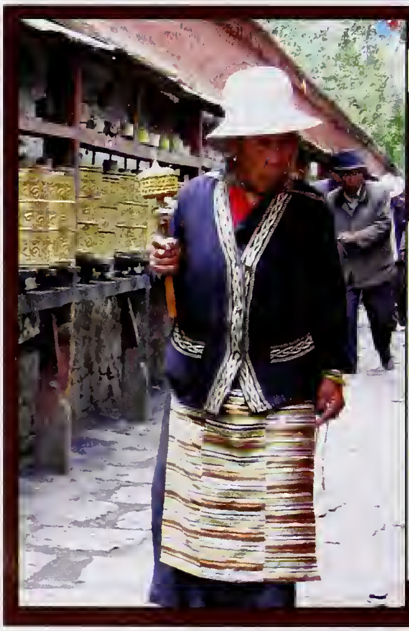
Davis' friend Anniece Berry, a nurse at Via Christi-Good Shepherd in Wichita, was also the president of the Wichita chapter of NBNA. Davis and Moses joined the organization but discovered there was no student component, similar to the National Student Nurses' Association.

"We wrote to the [NBNA] to see if they would approve us starting the first student chapter," says Moses. They got approval, as long as the group was organized under the auspices of the Wichita chapter.

Davis and Moses served as co-chairs of Bethel's first NBNA group, which had about 20 members in its first year. Dolce, Marla Bell and Patricia Ngigi are this year's officers.

The Bethel NBNA group's main activities thus far have been fund raising to endow scholarships for nursing students—leaders emphasize that anyone of any race may apply for these. NBNA members had a mini health fair at last year's Fall Festival and also participated in a larger local health fair. They contributed some of the money that allowed Dolce to attend the NBNA national convention, with the Wichita chapter adding the rest.

This year, the group hopes to add to its membership, both with Bethel nursing students and interested students from other area nursing programs. The Bethel NBNA is open to them since it is an arm of the Wichita chapter, Dolce says.
—*Melanie Zuercher of Bethel College*



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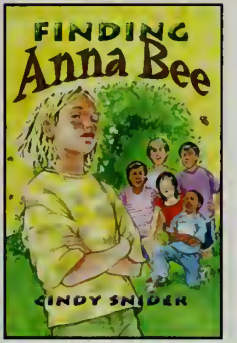

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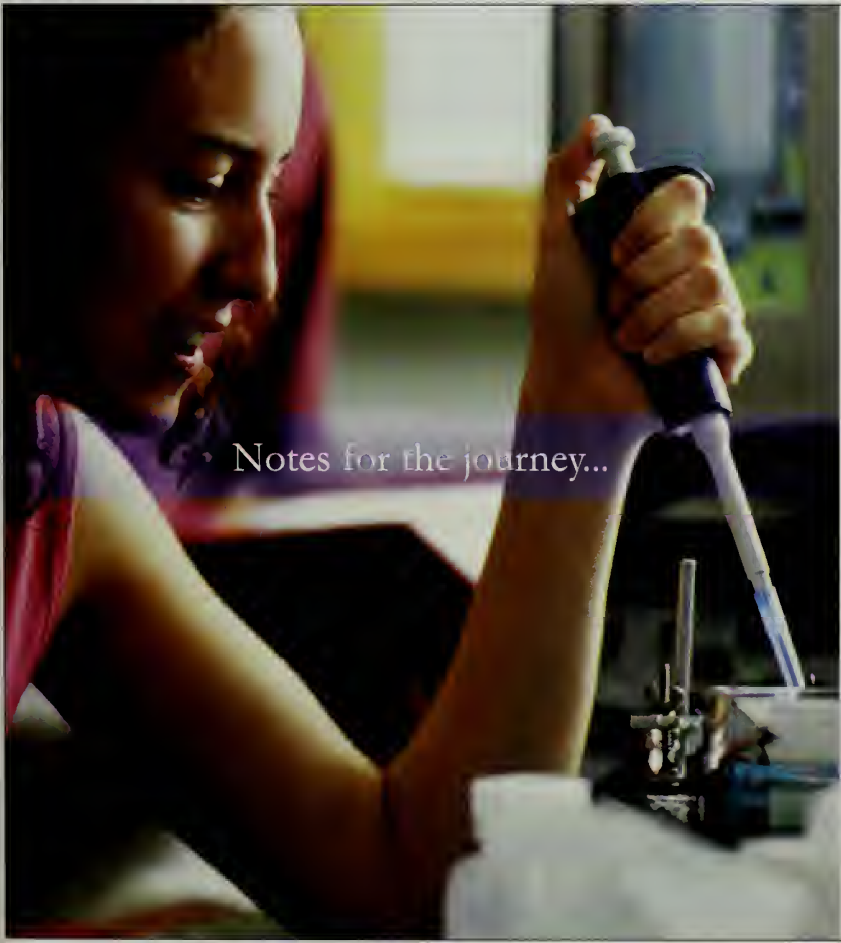
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CALENDAR

50th Anniversary celebration weekend for **Amigo Centre**, Oct. 19-21. Visit www.amigocentre.org or call 269-651-2811 for more details.

Friendship Community's ***Harmony Concert***, Nov. 17, at **Forest Hills Mennonite Church**, Leola, Pa.

A week-long ***intentional interim pastor training*** will be held Mon-Fri, Oct 29-Nov 2 at the **Lancaster Mennonite Conference Center**, Lancaster, Pa. This seminar is sponsored by Atlantic Coast, Eastern District, Franconia and Lancaster conferences, and is open to leaders in any MC USA or MC Canada conference. Dale Stoltzfus and Ken Bechtel will be the primary instructors. The registration fee is $200. For more information or to register, contact Laura Livengood, 717-293-5246 or llivengood@lancasterconference.org. View the brochure at www.lancasterconference.org.

WORKERS

Beiler, Keith L., associate pastor of Millwood Mennonite Church, Bird-In-Hand, Pa., withdrew his credential on July 11.

Copeland, Ronald, began a church plant at The Early Church, Harrisonburg, Va., on June 17.

Elizalde, Jose, was installed as pastor at North Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on July 29.

Fisher, Menno, B., lead pastor of Millwood Mennonite Church, Bird-in-Hand, Pa., withdrew his credential on July 11.

Lapp, M. Eugene, deacon at Millwood Mennonite Church, Bird-in-Hand, Pa., discontinued his license on July 11.

Perez, Rafael, lead pastor of Prince of Peace Mennonite Church, Reading, Pa., resigned Aug. 1.

Sensenig, Luke N., associate pastor of Millwood Mennonite Church, Bird-in-Hand, Pa. discontinued his license on July 11.

Troyer, John, was installed as youth pastor at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on Aug. 19.

Troyer, Sheila, was licensed as youth pastor at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on Aug. 19.

Voth, Cynthia, was licensed as minister for youth and family life at Lindale Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., on June 3.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Aeshliman-Yoder, Lucia Salomé, Aug. 19, to Darrin and Julie Aeshliman-Yoder, San Pedro Sula, Honduras.

Charlesworth, Finley Todd, July 13, to Rodney Charlesworth and Donna Harnish, Lancaster, Pa.

Elliot, Nathaniel Franklin, Aug. 24, to Dan and Joetta Riegsecker Elliot, Toledo, Ohio.

Gingerich, Liliana Belén, July 30, to David and Ericka Histand Gingerich, Hubbard, Ore.

Lichti, Georgia Harper Fletcher, Aug. 9, to Nolan and Nancy Fletcher Lichti, Indianapolis, Ind.

Miller, Cierra Renee, Aug. 26, to Steve and Holly Heft Miller, Hartville, Ohio.

Pumneo, Travis Jacob, Aug. 14, to John and Cheryl Norr Pumneo, Wooster, Ohio.

Trissel, Emma Rose, Aug. 24, to Cory and Charity Stoddard Trissel, Harrisonburg, Va.

MARRIAGES

Beard/Yoder: Jessica Beard, Nappanee, Ind., and Ryan Yoder, Nappanee, Aug. 25, at North Main Street Mennonite Church, Nappanee.

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Harder/Schrock: Elisabeth Harder, Mountain Lake, Minn., and Ramon Schrock, Exeland, Wis., July 21, at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Heckaman/Weaver: Jason Heckaman, Uniontown, Ohio, and Lindsey Weaver, Hartville, Ohio, Aug. 18, at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartville.

Landes/Spieser: Jessica Landes, Akron, Pa., and David Spieser, Colmar, France, Aug. 25, at Pilgrim Mennonite Church, Akron.

Miller/Suter: Jimmy Miller, Hartville, Ohio, and Kari Suter, Bluffton, Ohio, Aug. 4, at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Owens/Yoder: Kaitlyn Owens, Anderson, Ind., and Kristopher Yoder, Wakarusa, Ind., Aug. 18, at Columbus Avenue Church of Christ, Anderson.

Roggie/Selley: Jennifer Roggie, Lowville, N.Y., and Stephen Selley, Copenhagen, N.Y., Aug. 18, at Lowville Mennonite.

DEATHS

Janzen, Jeffrey, 42, Boise, Idaho, died Aug. 19. Parents: Robert and Judy Regier Janzen. Funeral: Aug. 24 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

Kennel, Vernon, 89, Atglen, Pa., died Aug. 16 of ventricular fibrillation. Spouse: Mildred Umble Kennel. Parents: Joseph and Annie Mast Kennel. Children: Larry, Deryl, Don, Arlin; 10 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 20 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen.

Koerner, Loray D., 88, Flanagan, Ill., died Aug. 14 of pneumonia. Spouse: Nettie F. Eigsti Koerner. Parents: Henry and Sadie Shantz Koerner. Children: Bonnie Stucky, Rebecca Koerner, David; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 17 at Prairieview Mennonite Church, Flanagan.

Landis, Bernice Bergey, 81, Souderton, Pa., died Aug. 21. Spouse: Clayton H. Landis. Parents: Howard and Sadie Derstine Bergey. Children: Daniel, Kevin, Andrew; 10 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 27 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Lehman, G. Irvin, 92, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 27. Spouse: Edith Vanderploeg Lehman (deceased). Spouse: Verna Yeager Lehman (deceased). Parents: George E. and Leah Martin Lehman. Children: George N., Peter D., Timothy J., Eunice Kerbs; four grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 1 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Lemke, Hildegard Scheffler, 73, Burnaby, British Columbia, died Aug. 13. Spouse: Helmut Lemke. Parents: Hugo and Susan Scheffler. Children: Michael, Krista, Hanno; four grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 25 at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, British Columbia.

Mast, John "Johnny," 76, Wooster, Ohio, died June 15. Spouse: Joretta Yarger Miller Mast. Spouse: Carolyn Schrock Mast (deceased). Parents: Leo and Marie Beyeler Mast. Children: Don, Diane Schmucker, Chris, Paul, Michelle Breneman; 15 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 19 at East Union Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio.

Nafziger, Elfrieda Nettie Toews, 69, Manhattan, Kan., died Sept. 2 of a stroke. Spouse: E. Wayne Nafziger. Parents: John A. and Nettie Wilms Toews. Children: Brian Wayne, Kevin Jon. Memorial service: Sept. 6 at All Faiths Chapel, Kansas State University, Manhattan.

Regier, Daniel George, 84, Hesston, Kan., died Aug. 22. Spouse: Goldie Jane Neufeld Regier. Parents: George Baergen and Maria Janzen Regier. Children: Sheryl Wineinger, Sandra Unruh; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 25 at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Schaefer, Donald E., 87, Lowville, N.Y., died Aug. 26. Spouse: Ilona M. Zehr Schaefer. Parents: William S. and Katherine Lehman Schaefer. Children: William, Elaine Matuszczak, Amy Deavers, Gary, Carla O'Brien, Ronald, Gail Lyndaker; 14 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 29 at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville.

Schrock, Mose Jr., 81, Topeka, Ind., died Aug. 24. Spouse: Mary Etta Mishler Schrock (deceased). Parents: Mose and Amanda Miller Schrock. Children: Lorene Schrock, LeMar, Leon, LaVon; two grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 28 at Emma Mennonite Church, Topeka.

Shenk, Margaret Mae, 88, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 11. Parents: Levi J. and Amanda Shenk. Funeral: Aug. 17 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Waterman, Danny Vivian Davis, 92, Paradis, La., died Aug. 8 of a stroke following a fall. Spouse: Orville Mennaugh Waterman (deceased). Parents: Leonard Clifton and Suzanna Buxton Davis. Children: Orville Hallington Waterman, Benny Basco Waterman, Michael Franklin Waterman, Patricia Ann Gaubert Callaway; 12 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 10 at Des Allemands Mennonite Church, Des Allemands, La.

Wedel, Rose Stucky, 103, Buhler, Kan., died Sept. 3. Spouse: Philip A. Wedel (deceased). Parents: John and Freni Stucky. Children: Ruth Schmidt, Dean Regehr, Laland; 10 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 6 at Buhler Sunshine Home.

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Dr. John Stahl-Wert is keynote speaker at Spruce Lake Retreat's ***leadership training event*** Oct. 10-12: "Harness raw potential for extraordinary results." Call 800-822-7505, www.sprucelake.org.

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Associate director in human resources. This person develops MCC policies and policy revisions, oversees administration of MCC compensation and benefits work and ensures that HR procedures and processes are carried out in an effective, efficient, timely way. This person assists the human resources director in dealing with personnel crises and other departmental tasks. Requirements include three to five years experience working with compensation and benefits; demonstrated knowledge of employment law within the United States; excellent written and oral communication skills; demonstrated ability to make decisions when supervisor is absent; demonstrated ability to manage multiple tasks involving details and the ability to keep personnel information confidential.

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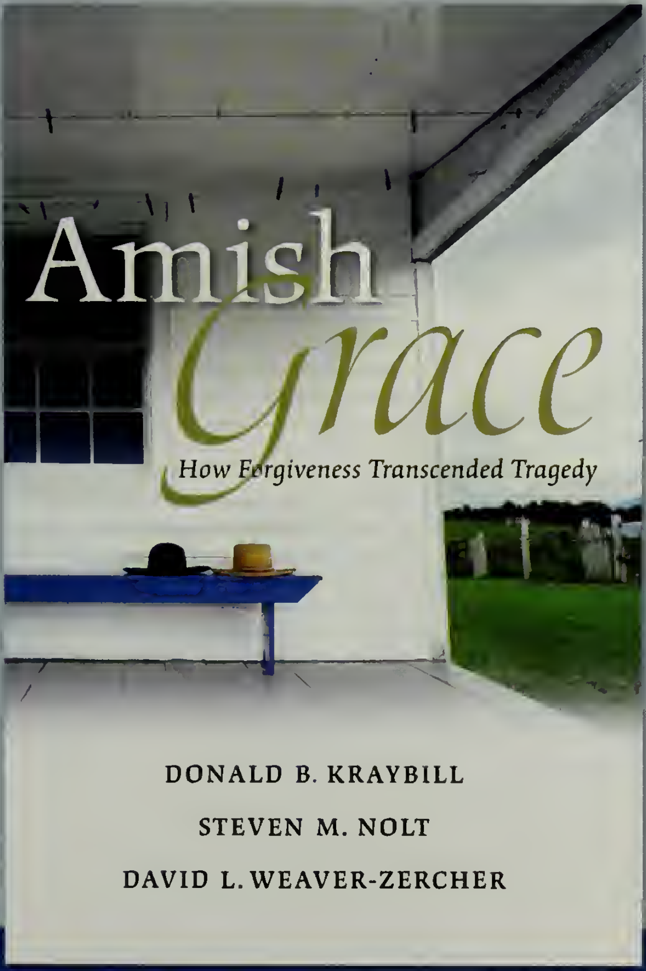
South Hutchinson (Kan.) Mennonite Church, a growing, purpose-driven, multisite church, seeks ***full-time associate pastor*** to lead ministry at a second campus. Applicants should possess a love for people, vision for rural community outreach and a willingness to work within a multistaff team. Contact Gary Wolfer at gwolfer@gregory1.com or 620-543-2603.

MCC representative: Mexico City. This three- to five-year volunteer provides overall leadership and vision to MCC work in Mexico. Must have a strong identification with MCC's mission, philosophy of development and manner of working. Must respect and have the willingness to work and live within the Mexican culture. Knowledge of community development theory and models preferred. Ability to create, write, monitor and evaluate plans and budgets needed. Ability to communicate in Spanish required. The large geographic focus of the MCC programs in Mexico requires significant travel and limited team time. Candidates of a gender or ethnic group typically underrepresented in this type of MCC assignment are encouraged to apply. Contact Kathy Jackson at krj@mcc.org or call 717-859-1151 for more information or to apply.



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When debt becomes too much

Anna Groff

This article and review are available as podcasts at www.TheMennonite.org

Maxed Out (available on DVD), a documentary about America's debt crisis, shows the desperation of American families overwhelmed by consumer debt.

Elizabeth Warren, a professor from Harvard Law School, predicts that if the crisis continues, the United States could fall into a two-tiered system—with a smaller group of successful, stable families and a much larger group of families in debt, barely making it paycheck to paycheck.

I wonder how the church will respond to this system—or will churches simply fall into these two tiers, with those who owe money and those who have money segregated from one another? And how will churches respond to individuals featured in *Maxed Out*—like Sean, who found himself $12,000 in debt his sophomore year in college? And how would they comfort Sean's mother after he died by suicide that same year?

Another individual in *Maxed Out*—a widow in California—went into debt after her husband's death and took out the ever-tempting cash advances to make house payments.

She kept taking them out thinking, If [the companies] think I can pay this, maybe I can pay this. But, she says, "29 percent interest kills you." She also admits to looking for the foreclosure on the house every time she checks the mail, all the while fighting thoughts of suicide.

These powerful stories explain the cycle of indebtedness, but *Maxed Out* relies too much on text shown in parentheses after certain clips. For example, after showing a clip of Suze Orman firmly instructing to her audience that their FICO credit score is the number one determinant in their interest rates and financial futures, a still shot of text reads "She has a deal with FICO's parent company."

Another shot says FICO has nothing to do with one's income and is often inaccurate.

These tidbits offer superficial facts into the murky world of credit corruption but would persuade me more genuinely if evoked in interviews instead of text.

One clip runs without any commentary or text: Jerry Falwell presenting his spiel on "spiritual mathematics"—the logic that if one gives more to God, they will end up with more in their pocket.

Falwell tells families in financial trouble, "A bad attitude about money got you into debt."

I rolled my eyes at Falwell's advice and dismissed it (as the writer intends). Falwell blames the debtor entirely, without taking into consideration how credit card companies strategically target the most marginalized and vulnerable.

For instance, Warren claims a vice president of MasterCard admitted to her that a bank's most popular customers are people who have declared bankruptcy for two reasons: First, they cannot file for bankruptcy again. Second, they have a "taste for credit" and are willing to make minimum payments indefinitely.

These "popular customers" are easy to find. This year, more Americans will go bankrupt than will get cancer or divorced.

In another clip, two young debt buyers defend the system by arguing for all-around integrity, claiming that credit was made available for people with all kinds of emergency needs, but when it comes time for them to pay it back, they need to step up and do their part.

But, Warren argues, it's not that simple. She claims that for every dollar charged, the average American pays $2 more in interest and fees. So while people in debt must take responsibility, it's astounding to realize the profits credit card companies rake in.

Churches must begin to speak about this as an injustice. We can take a different approach from Falwell and others by continuing to dialogue about spending and stewardship but proceeding in a way that addresses the corruption of credit card companies and understands that the oversimplified "spiritual mathematics" may not work in all situations.

The Christian Century's Aug. 7 issue ("Crusade Against Debt") also covers consumer debt and features Dave Ramsey, a "radio personality and anti-credit crusader." Ramsey is also interviewed in *Maxed Out*.

The article critiques the evangelical financial ministries of Ramsey and others as having political agendas and of "thinking too small." The messages about credit and debt benefit the middle-class, who want to spend guiltlessly after tithing and saving—and perhaps Jesus' message about money is far bigger than that.

BOOKS

Two recent books address the shootings last Oct. 2 of Amish schoolchildren and the witness of the Amish in forgiving the murderer and embracing his family. **Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy** by Donald B. Kraybill, Steven M. Nolt and David L. Weaver-Zercher (Jossey-Bass, 2007, $24.95) is a mostly journalistic account by three academics who are well-acquainted with the Amish and who were asked by many media outlets about Amish beliefs and practices. Written clearly and quoting Amish voices extensively, this book covers the events and discusses questions about the Amish response of forgiveness. **Forgiveness: A Legacy of the West Nickel Mines Amish School** by John L. Ruth (Herald Press, 2007, $10.99) covers much of the same material but is a more reflective, theological and literary account. Both books respond to such questions as, How could the Amish forgive so quickly? Was it easy? and, What about shunning?—*Gordon Houser*

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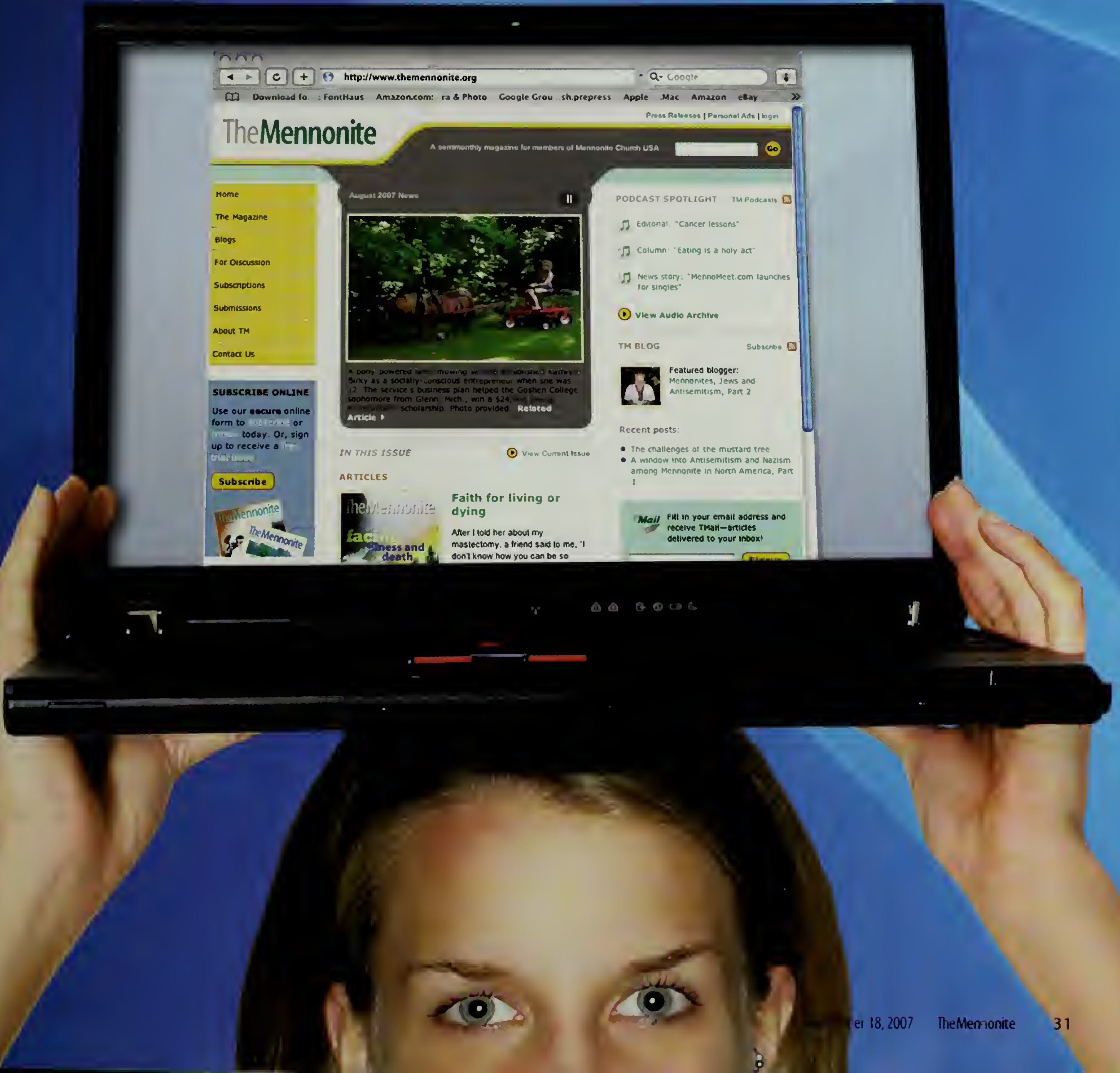

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August 2007 News

A pony-powered la[illegible] mowing se[illegible] [illegible] Kathryn Birky as a socially-conscious entrepreneur when she was 12. The service's business plan helped the Goshen College sophomore from Glenn, Mich., win a $24,[illegible] [illegible] scholarship. Photo provided. Related Article ▸

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Gordon Houser

Embodied faith

Go and tell John what you have seen and heard.
—Luke 7:22

Like any good Jew of his day, Jesus was an empiricist at heart. Though not visible, God was manifested through deeds in the physical world. John the Baptist wanted a word of confirmation that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. Jesus told his messengers, Look around.

When Philip wanted to convince Nathanael to follow Jesus with him, he said, "Come and see" (John 1:46). Even when Jesus is resurrected, he is not presented as some ethereal presence but a body with the marks of his torture and death.

As Doug Hochstetler points out (page 8), over the years, the church often has adopted a dualistic notion of humanity. We often consider ourselves inhabiting a body rather than being a body. One of the early heresies of Christianity, Gnosticism, denigrated the body as evil, "a prisonhouse of the soul."

But if we believe the Incarnation, that "the Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:14), we must resist the notion that flesh is evil. Each time we divide ourselves into body and mind, or body and spirit, we distort the way God created us, as unified beings.

Our spirituality must be embodied to be real. We live as bodies, and all that we do is to be in obedience to the Spirit.

We tend not only to divide ourselves, separating body and spirit, but we give greater value to what we call the spiritual. This further distorts the biblical understanding of spiritual as in the direction of the Holy Spirit, not as something nonmaterial.

Our spirituality must be embodied to be real. We live as bodies, and all that we do is to be in obedience to the Spirit. Thus, dishwashing, housebuilding, changing diapers or trash hauling are to be spiritual activities every bit as much as praying, preaching or singing hymns.

Jesus was unembarrassed by the body. He not only touched lepers and mingled with other outcasts, he let himself be touched and cared for—for example, by the woman suffering from hemorrhages for 12 years (Luke 8:43) and the woman who bathed his feet with her tears and dried them with her hair (Luke 7:38). He scandalized not only the religious leaders but his own followers. We, too, if we are honest, are likely scandalized by such actions.

Part of the genius of Anabaptist spirituality is in recapturing the early church's insistence on our faith being lived out in the real world. Knowing Christ requires following him in life.

For Anabaptist martyrs, carrying Christ's cross was not an idea but something they actually suffered in their bodies. Also they saw their faith as having a direct impact on their possessions and how those are shared.

Mennonites today retain a sense of embodied faith. We are drawn to doing service with our hands. (At least many are. Some of us tend to live in our heads and play with ideas.) We are drawn to food, to making quilts or putting together school kits. Many have been drawn to healing professions such as medicine or nursing. Others are involved in trades, in business.

But we easily get caught up in ideas, in squabbles over interpretations. We lose sight of the fact that our faith is to be lived out as bodies. We are to look around and see God at work in the world.

Another emphasis of Anabaptist spirituality is on community. As Stephanie Paulsell points out in her wonderful book *Honoring the Body: Meditations on a Christian Practice*: "The integrity of our bodies is a gift from God, but the meaning of our bodies does not stop at the boundaries of our skin. For we belong to one another, and so we are called to attend to the effects of our choices."

Together we live out an embodied faith, following the way of our Lord Jesus Christ under the direction of the Holy Spirit in the real world. God created us as bodies, and we honor that good creation by living faithfully as such.—*gh*

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Lessons from premarital counseling

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

When I first became a pastor, I rarely got invited to officiate at weddings. Every good Mennonite, it seemed, had a cousin or aunt who was a pastor. She was asked to officiate at the wedding. I was asked to provide the premarital counseling.

The first few times, I approached the task believing it was my job to help couples solve whatever problems they had and so make them ready for marriage. I was the expert who had the training they lacked and so was in a position to get them ready for life together.

To a certain extent, that was true. Not so much the expert part. I had no list of hidden secrets passed down through the generations, no inside track on making relationships work over time.

But along the way I had picked up a few common-sense notions of how relationships work best. From that limited repertoire, I worked with couples toward greater awareness of the issues potentially awaiting them and the tools they'd need to face them. Now I realize that mostly what I did was listen and reflect with them, repeating what they already knew to be true.

Things have changed over the years. Now I'm asked more frequently to officiate at weddings. While some of my pastor friends have grown weary of all the extra time and pressure weddings involve, I still enjoy them. I'm nourished watching people join themselves in this way and in the context of worship with the gathered community.

Marilou, my wife, and I now do the counseling together, a wonderful gift from Marilou to me and to the couples with whom we meet. Having male and female present on both ends of the conversation provides a safer, more welcoming environment. And our different takes on our marriage inevitably enrich the session. I recommend the practice of inviting a colleague of the opposite sex to share the work of counseling.

I have also changed my expectations about premarital counseling. I no longer assume our efforts will result in some brilliant new insight. Instead, premarital counseling serves as a place to name what is already known. Points of difference, areas in which communication is difficult, the various baggage being lugged into the relationship, are laid on the table and gently explored.

Where gifts are evident, we name them, reinforcing their existence and their potential for good. Where points of tension remain, we name them too, encouraging the couple to keep working at them and seek help from the community.

Nowadays we are much more modest about what premarital counseling can and ought to do. What may be most important is simply providing the couple with a safe place in which to open their most cherished relationship to the loving, prayerful care of others. Ideally, premarital counseling is just the first step in what will become a lifelong practice of couples seeking the care and counsel of sisters and brothers in Christ.

Marriage, like the rest of life in Christ, is a communal happening. That's easy to remember on the wedding day, with friends and family gathered around to worship and celebrate with the couple. It's harder to remember a month, a year or 10 years later, when most of us have learned to keep such things private.

If I have one wish for every couple with whom we've counseled, it is that they replicate the vulnerability expressed in premarital counseling throughout their marriage, leaning on their sisters and brothers as they live and love together. And I pray for the rest of us that when they do, we will be ready to welcome them in and listen.

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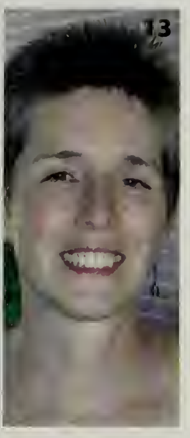

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Mennonites and Holocaust denial

Re Bruce Leichty's letter (Readers Say, Aug. 21): it should be pointed out that his group is in fact an anti-Semitic organization with connections to known Holocaust deniers as well as a variety of bizarre conspiracy theorists. A glance at their Web site makes this obvious.

The German Mennonite collusion with the Nazis in World War II is detailed in the new Mennonite World Conference history of European Mennonites, *Testing Faith and Tradition*. John D. Thiesen's 1999 Pandora Press book, *Mennonite and Nazi? Attitudes Among Mennonite Colonists in Latin America, 1933-1945*, also examines this obscene chapter in Mennonite history.

In light of our past, we should be forthright in renouncing and denouncing any link to Holocaust denial. To say the least, our past makes us suspect among Jews when we testify about injustices in Palestine.—*Ross L. Bender, Philadelphia*

Principled liberalism

I applaud Dennis R. Koehn for being willing to "speak out" on his beliefs as a "principled liberal" (Speaking Out, Aug. 7).

While he may draw criticism from conservatives for not expressing strong emphasis on "getting people saved," he expresses principles basic to the Christian faith. He emphasizes the values of "interdependence, justice, respect, compassion, service, nonviolent peace building and community." Are these not the essential values of a Christian—values Jesus spoke of and lived out? Just as Jesus spoke about God's immediate kingdom being already present, Koehn is concerned about helping bring about the kingdom of God already here and now, not just to getting people "saved" for future life. When people see the kind of values expressed by Koehn, they may then be attracted to Christianity. I thank God for liberals like Koehn; may they receive the respect they deserve.—*Edwin G. Moyer, Quakertown, Pa.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Assistant editor Anna Groff proposed the idea for this issue and did most of the work on it. She was aware of this trend toward urban migration among Mennonite young adults and knew people to talk to about it. See her stories on pages 8-15. Separately, Sheri Hostetler, pastor of First Mennonite Church of San Francisco, sent us her article (page 16) about that congregation's success in using worship to develop young leaders. We have received complaints about copies of *The Mennonite* arriving in the mail damaged. We are aware of the problem, and our printer is addressing it with the U.S. Postal Service.—*Acting editor*

A modest proposal for Communion

"A Modest Proposal for Communion" by Marlene Kropf (Sept. 4) and the other articles in that issue on Communion richly blessed me. When I served as chaplain at the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem in the winter of 1983-84, we attended Sunday evening services at Evangelical Christ Church, Anglican, where Communion was observed on alternate Sunday evenings (and in every morning service). We learned that worshiping the Lord Jesus in this sacred service strengthened our faith immensely.

When we returned to our congregation at Hartville, Ohio, I encouraged our leadership to institute four Communion services annually, two traditional with foot washing, and two blended into our regular service. In subsequent congregations I did the same, and all of them continue this ministry. There were many confirmations. Were I to pastor churches today, I would encourage monthly Communion services. The closer we draw to Christ in Communion, the more "peaceably" we live with one another.—*Richard F. Ross, Orrville, Ohio*

I was gratified by the thoughtful articles on Communion (Sept. 4) and affirm the concerns they raise. I was moved to respond to two of them.

As the authors note, our church's practice of the Lord's Supper is diverse. My experience in liberal Mennonite circles is that we have moved so far from a focus on Jesus' sacrifice that I hear little of the wonder and mystery of God's redemptive love on the cross; I sense little of the reverence that arises from the contemplation of Jesus dying for us. I am not calling for gloom and guilt at the Lord's Table but awe and gratitude. I agree that it is also the celebration of resurrection, of bread for the world. But only by reciting the whole story each time (death, resurrection, sign of kingdom—placing greater weight on the underemphasized aspects in a given congregation) can we nurture balance in congregations and the denomination.

The principle of balance applies to the whole service. Fresh words and gestures need to be combined with unchanging ones. The power of ritual lies in its repetition and universality. The core of almost all Christian forms of worship is the words of institution as they are recorded in the New Testament. To change them takes away the only words all churches have in common and makes our ritual unrecognizable to other traditions.

Ray Hurst writes that he would like to open Communion to "all who thirst for God." I share his yearning to be open to people who venture the first tentative step of coming to faith. But we already have a ritual that does that: baptism. Conversion and baptism are unreservedly inclusive: Everyone who is willing to take a chance on Jesus is embraced with the sign of baptism. To open the breaking of bread to people who have not made the covenant with Jesus and the church confuses what it means to become a Christian, and this jeopardizes the Mennonite understanding of the church.—*John D. Rempel, Elkhart, Ind.*

ACHE affirms health-care plan for church workers

We, the members of the Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics (ACHE) Board of Directors, want our brothers and sisters who relate to Mennonite Church USA to know our views about an issue given strong affirmation by delegates to MC USA in San José, Calif., in July: health-care access for our pastors and church workers.

We already have given much thought and energy to this issue through the work of our representatives, Glen Miller and Joseph Kotva Jr., and through our production of *Healing Healthcare: A Study and Action Guide on Healthcare Access in the United States* (2005), which we hope all congregations take the opportunity to study in depth.

As was clearly explained by MC USA executive director James Schrag in San José: "Today's choices determine tomorrow's possibilities. We now have the choice to insure access to basic health services for all church workers, including pastors. ... This choice will test our identity as deeply as other challenges have in our long history." This choice was made by MC USA delegates, but it now must be made by conferences, church institutions and congregations if a basic churchwide health-care plan is to become a reality for church workers. We urge all concerned to make this choice.

For this plan to be successful, some of us will need to sacrifice so that the needs of all may be met. Institutions and individuals will have to follow the example of the "great physician" who provided health care to the needy—whether they were financially rich or poor, Jewish or Gentile. Surely we can at least provide for our own church servants and thereby demonstrate a workable model that can be applied on a larger scale.

Let us demonstrate our love for one another, as did the early church: "There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold" (Acts 4:34). Let us start with church workers, not denying basic support and care for those who do the work of the church (1 Timothy 5:18).

We know that this plan, as important as it is in providing health-care coverage to employees of the church, is only a small step toward a larger goal. We believe a wealthy society (and church) has a moral imperative to make affordable health care available to all. When this plan is successful, it can become a stepping stone to providing improved health-care access to all members of the church and, ultimately, to everyone. We recognize that addressing government on behalf of "the least of these" will be part of the church's task in reaching the goal of accessible health care for all.

Access to adequate health care is a matter of justice and compassion. Old Testament prophets consistently judged the people of Israel on the basis of their care for the poor and needy, the orphans and widows. Jesus in his inaugural sermon announced the coming of God's reign, proclaiming good news to the poor, captive, blind and oppressed. As his hands, feet and voice in our world, let our compassion for those who suffer motivate us to work and speak for justice that provides access to health care for all in our church and society.—*Rick Stiffney, chair, representing Mennonite Health Services Alliance; Steve Garboden, MMA; Anne Hershberger, member at large; Clair Hochstetler, Mennonite Chaplains Association; Ted Koontz, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary; Willard Krabill, member at large; Glen Miller, member at large; Phyllis Miller, Mennonite Nurses Association; Sam Showalter, Mennonite Medical Association*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

I have lived in a city of over 100,000 people for (71 votes):

○ One to five years (14%)

○ Five to 10 years (10%)

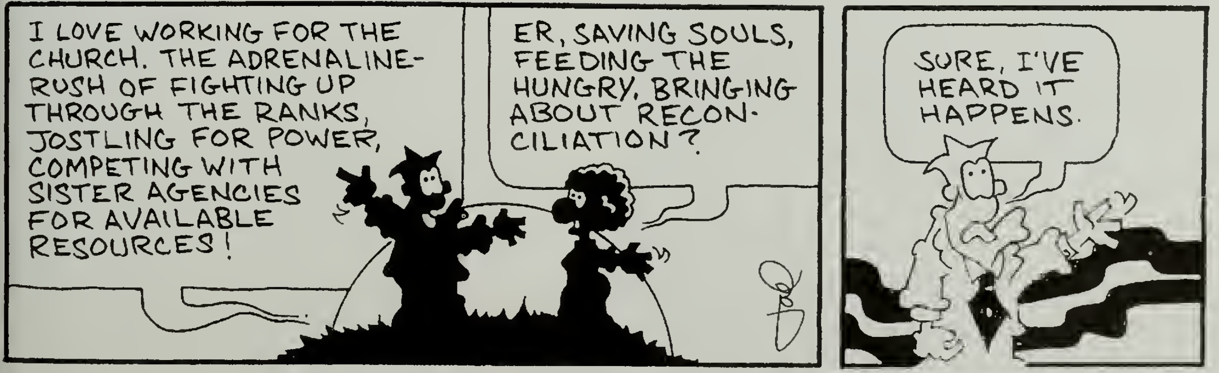
○ Over 10 years (41%)

○ Never (35%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


I LOVE WORKING FOR THE CHURCH. THE ADRENALINE-RUSH OF FIGHTING UP THROUGH THE RANKS, JOSTLING FOR POWER, COMPETING WITH SISTER AGENCIES FOR AVAILABLE RESOURCES!
ER, SAVING SOULS, FEEDING THE HUNGRY, BRINGING ABOUT RECONCILIATION?
SURE, I'VE HEARD IT HAPPENS.

IN BRIEF

What we don't read in war news

"I spend about four hours a day reading and listening to news. ... What I have not gleaned from all the news in my life is that U.S. Air Force and Navy aircraft dropped 437 bombs and missiles in Iraq during the first six months of 2007. These air strikes represent a fivefold increase over the 86 used in the first half of 2006, and three times more than in the second half of 2006, according to Air Force data. In June, bombs were dropped at a rate of more than five a day. I found that information from an Associated Press article that most media did not pick up."
—Kathleen Kern, *Mennonite Weekly Review*

Hesston College wins radio award

The Hesston (Kan.) College Amateur Radio Club Station KOHC won the Intercollegiate Amateur Radio Club Championship in 2005 and 2006. Amateur radio, the only internationally regulated hobby, exists to further communications technology and provide emergency communications in times of crisis. That is thought to be the first national championship of any kind won by a Hesston College team. The college's amateur radio club topped school teams fielded by Stanford, Michigan State, Harvard and more. *—Hesston College*

Mennonite offices to be energy-efficient

ELKHART, Ind.—Architects say the design for a planned office building for Mennonite offices in Elkhart, Ind., emphasizes Anabaptist values of stewardship and efficiency while leaving space for worshipful work.

LeRoy Troyer of The Troyer Group in Mishawaka, Ind., says the building, which will house Elkhart staff of Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership, Mennonite Mission Network and other Mennonite organizations in a space adjacent to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, balances care for the earth with effective use of campaign contributions.

The design includes an emphasis on natural light, which Troyer says has been shown to increase worker efficiency and health while decreasing energy use. Leaders also plan to use other "green" technologies that are efficient, effective and affordable, including the possibility of geothermal energy for heat from water. Campaign leaders will work to incorporate Mennonite constituents' talents and resources by finding portions of the project where workers, artists and artisans can volunteer labor or donate materials, equipment, furnishings and artwork.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Charles Studio

Goshen and EMU soccer games played in Lancaster

Eastern Mennonite University's, Harrisonburg, Va., Kelsey Yoder (left) and Goshen (Ind.) College's Lucy Roth (right) battle for control of the ball during a soccer match played on Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School's newly lighted artificial turf field on Sept. 15. Goshen won the men's game 4-1, breaking a long-standing drought against EMU. In the second game, the Goshen and EMU ladies battled to a 0-0 tie after regulation and two sudden-death overtimes. Nearly 2,000 spectators gathered for the games.—*Eastern Mennonite University*

Global Youth Summit 2009 to triple in size

STRASBOURG, France—The second Global Youth Summit scheduled during Mennonite World Conference (MWC) annual meeting in Paraguay 2009 is estimated to triple in size from the previous GYS in Zimbabwe 2003.

Amandus Reimber, vice president of MWC's youth committee, AMIGO, reported they are expecting 850 young people from throughout the world to gather for GYS; 400 from Paraguay, 200 from the Northern Hemisphere and 150 from the South. The main theme for GYS is "Service: Live the Difference."—*Mennonite World Conference*

Harriet Lapp Burkholder of Goshen dies

GOSHEN, Ind.—Harriet Lapp Burkholder, a long-time community leader and the wife of former Goshen College president J. Lawrence Burkholder, died Sept. 6 in Goshen after a long illness.

Burkholder, 92, was a community leader, a Sunday school teacher, a peace activist, a spokesperson for harmonious international relations and a volunteer who spent many decades supporting Goshen College. A 1937 graduate of Goshen, Burkholder was a key supporter of and fund-raiser for the college during her husband's presidency from 1971 to 1984. She hosted many receptions for students, faculty, community members and donors, and along with Naomi Hunsberger and Beth Rieth helped establish the college's popular Afternoon Sabbatical education program for the community.

Burkholder married J. Lawrence in 1939, and they had four children: Myrna Burkholder (Goshen), Howard Burkholder (Boston), Janet Friesen (Flint, Mich.), and Gerald Burkholder (deceased in 1981); and eventually two grandchildren: Erica Friesen (Chicago) and Eliot Friesen (Cambridge, Mass.).

Harriet and J. Lawrence Burkholder were awarded the college's "Culture for Service" award in 1990.—*Goshen College*

Philhaven's new center celebrates opening

LANCASTER, Pa.—Philhaven's Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities (CADD), Lancaster, hosted an open house to celebrate the grand opening of its new location at 1886 Rohrerstown Road on Aug. 17.

The Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities is a behavioral health program focusing on the diagnosis and treatment of behavioral, social and emotional problems in individuals with developmental disorders.

Since opening in 2005, the center has been striving to address the need in the area for one

Everett J. Thomas

e destroys four buildings during Michiana Relief Sale

fair board members talk to a relief sale participant Sept. after a water heater tipped over and started a fire that troyed four buildings around 1:30 a.m. at the Michiana nnonite Relief Sale in Goshen, Ind. No one was hurt in the ze at the Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds. The Elkhart nship fire chief estimated the fire damage at $250,000. ause electrical wires were damaged by the blaze, the urday portion of the event continued with limited electrici- rovided by generators. The preliminary total generated by sale was $418,889, a new record.—*The Mennonite* staff

single location where families can benefit from a team of professionals with expertise in developmental disabilities.—*Philhaven*

MCC assesses damage from Hurricane Felix

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is helping provide food and other aid in seven indigenous communities in northeastern Nicaragua that were devastated by Hurricane Felix. MCC has provided $42,000 to purchase and distribute a five-day supply of groceries and basic items, such as water purification tablets and plastic sheeting, to about 3,000 people.

An MCC partner organization, Centro Intereclesial de Estudios Teologicos y Sociales (CIEETS), is distributing the aid in remote areas near the border with Honduras.

Most of the beneficiaries are Miskito and Mayagna indigenous people who lost crops, livestock and other possessions to the hurricane, according to CIEETS.

Felix made landfall in northeastern Nicaragua on Sept. 4 as a powerful category five hurricane before continuing over Honduras and dissipating.

MCC partner organizations are assessing needs in this region and preparing requests for aid. Nicaragua's Anabaptist Emergency Commission sent representatives to hurricane-affected communities that take three days to reach, according to Mark Epp, MCC's associate director for Latin America and the Caribbean.

MCC is accepting financial contributions to assist people affected by Hurricane Felix and Hurricane Dean, which struck Mexico and Belize in August. Contributions may be made online at mcc.org/donate or at any MCC office. They should be designated for "2007 Hurricane Relief."—*Mennonite Central Committee*

Tennessee church uses memorial garden

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—Knoxville Mennonite Church, with limited space for a cemetery, will memorialize past church members in a small flower garden adjacent to the sanctuary.

Don Yoder, a landscape architect from Indiana, drew up the plans for the garden. Yoder donated the large Dogwood tree at the center of the memorial, which he said is representative of Christ "looking down on the garden." Flowers lining the garden's pathways add to the design and represent new life.

Near the center of the garden is a granite pad featuring brass tabs with the engraved name, date of birth and date of death of the deceased member. In the future, a new tab will be added to the granite to memorialize other members. Benches have been added to facilitate an atmosphere of sanctuary and meditation.—*Knoxville Mennonite Church*

EMU participates in Archbishop Tutu visit

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Nobel laureate Desmond Tutu received a quilt made by two Mennonite sisters, literature on peace and justice by Eastern Mennonite University faculty and news about the role of EMU students and alumni in promoting peace and reconciliation around the world while visiting Harrisonburg on Sept. 21.

At a tree-planting ceremony at James Madison University, EMU president Loren Swartzendruber thanked JMU's Mahatma Gandhi Center for Global Nonviolence for including EMU in welcoming Tutu.—*Eastern Mennonite University*

Turpin Mennonite Church celebrates 100 years

TURPIN, Okla.—More than 200 people participated in activities at Turpin Mennonite Church on Sept. 1 and 2 as the church celebrated its 100th anniversary.

Sept. 1 included speakers, a picnic lunch served to 170 people, a German dinner served to 300 people, children's activities and an evening program. The Sunday morning worship service featured six former pastors.

—*compiled by Anna Groff*

IN BRIEF

True prayer

Reflecting on the purpose of prayer, Elie Wiesel asks: "Why should God need our prayer? Why should God need our flattery? How come he is not repulsed by all that?" Wiesel concludes that "God does not need our prayers. We need them. We need to be able to pray in sincerity and beauty. And the prayer should not be against somebody but always for somebody. That is a true prayer, when it is for someone else, not for yourself." He adds: "I would like *my* prayers ... to be turned into stories."—*The Christian Century*

Focus on the Family will keep tax-exempt status

The Internal Revenue Service has ruled that Focus on the Family, Colorado Springs, Colo., will not lose its tax-exempt status despite the public political stances taken by its chairman, reports *The Denver Post*. James Dobson, who founded the group, endorsed Republican candidates for office in 2004, and his religious charity is well known for supporting conservative causes. However, the IRS has ruled that he acted as an individual when promoting candidates and not on behalf of Focus on the Family. Two liberal watchdog groups had complained to the IRS about Dobson's political activities in 2005, and the agency had been investigating for a year.—*Philanthropy Today*

Why young people move together to urb

Photo provided

Laura Leischner, Denver

The app

by Anna Groff

When graduation time nears for college students, making future plans becomes more urgent. Many find themselves ready to venture beyond the rural, college town they may have spent their entire lives in, but they also have a strong desire to hold on to the relationships they invested their last four years in. Holding both priorities, many young people make plans to move to a new city with their friends.

Young people feel drawn to cities that they or their friends lived in during a year or semester of service. They may like a city for the arts scene or the outdoor activities available. Or they may be attracted to the Mennonite community already established there.

Popular cities include Washington; Pittsburgh; Baltimore; New York City; Chicago; Portland, Ore.; Denver, Pasadena, Calif., and San Antonio, Texas, among others.

Popular cities include Washington, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, New York City, Chicago, Portland, Ore., Denver, Pasadena, Calif., and San Antonio.

reas and what they do when they get there

al of cities

Laura Leischner, 21, is sold on Denver. Laura, who participated in the Ministry Inquiry Program with First Mennonite Church of Denver, says she'll return to Denver after she graduates from Goshen (Ind.) College next spring.

Originally from Harrisonburg, Va., Laura likes Denver for its surroundings—the mountains—with the urban atmosphere and nature in close proximity, as well as the size, which doesn't "feel too overwhelming," she says.

The growing group of young Mennonites is also attractive.

Laura says people make such close friendships at college—and they don't want to lose those friendships—so they move together to cities. Many people prioritize relationships over career when choosing a city and decide to job-hunt after the move, she says.

Many graduates in a new city reconnect, or connect for the first time. Laura says she hangs out in Denver with college peers she wasn't necessarily friends with at school, but there's a "common bond." She says a group of friends meet up on Sunday nights to picnic and attend City Park Jazz, an activity that creates "a sense of community within a larger city," she says.

Laura's friends have jobs as teachers, wait staff, research assistants, secretaries, nonprofit employees and free-lance graphic designers.

"Jobs run the spectrum," she says.

"When I come back, I'll most likely waitress in order to make a lot of money fast," she says, "although I'm not opposed to other things. It seems to be an interesting dichotomy between starting one's career and doing interim things until the time feels right to move on to something else, perhaps more long term."

For Denver resident Heidi Swartzendruber, city life is nothing new.

Heidi, who describes herself as a "city girl," grew up in Denver, and partway through Hesston (Kan.) College she worked with Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) in Seattle before attending Goshen College.

After graduating, she did MVS again—this time in San Francisco—before returning to Denver, where she now lives.

Heidi says these urban experiences helped her discover her Mennonite identity. "A lot of Mennonites in cities will go back to a Mennonite church because it is who you are in a huge amount of people," she says. The distinctive Mennonite beliefs are attractive, she adds.

People move in groups because it's so hard to move alone.

In cities such as San Francisco, and especially in the social work field, many people assume "Christian" means "right-wing" or "fundamentalist," she says. "You have to find your way and show people who you are."

While most young people do not have the variety of urban experience Heidi has had, many want to experience city life—with the art galleries, films, current activities and job opportunities, she says.

People move in groups because it's so hard to move alone, she says. For example, Heidi's younger sister Sarah just graduated from Goshen and decided she wanted to return to Denver, where she grew up and still had connections to high school friends.

She returned to Goshen after Christmas break and told other seniors about her decision, encouraging them to move with her.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

People indifferent about which city they want to live in will move with a group of people, Heidi says.

Sarah's excitement for Denver proved contagious. A handful of people from Goshen moved, and others plan to join. Those who moved last summer got temp jobs for several months before finding permanent jobs. Many live together in two houses.

Job searching is different in each city, says Heidi. For example, she says she would "never move to San Francisco without a job."

Heidi says voluntary service is a good idea if one wants to move to a city with a competitive job market, like San Francisco. MVS also provides an automatic church and community, she says. "If you don't like it, you can move away."

Non-MVSers who move to cities often have two approaches to church, says Heidi. The first group include people who didn't attend church regularly in college but see that the church community post-college has value, so while they aren't exactly sure what they want from it immediately, they know they want to participate in several years.

The second group needs a stable community, especially when they feel new to an area. This group desires the weekly routine of attending church "to come and be in a space to listen to music and make connections with people who have similar beliefs," she says.

Young people feel the pull to cities for a change from a rural setting.

Heidi says First Mennonite Church of Denver offers this "open, nebulous space."

Matthew Kraybill, a young adult who now lives in Pasadena, Calif., agrees that Denver is a new popular spot for young adults. He knows of 10 people in their late 20s, mostly graduates of Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), Harrisonburg, Va., who live in Denver or are planning to move soon.

Before moving west, Matthew lived in West Philadelphia with 10 to 15 EMU graduates. He says Philadelphia offered career options and friendships, and for many it was close to home in the East.

Patrick Buller was new to city life when he moved to Phoenix, Ariz., in 2004. He felt ready to leave his "small-town Kansas" even though he wasn't set on moving to a large city.

But friends won out when they encouraged him to move to Phoenix. Since the move he's made even more connections, especially through Trinity Mennonite Church in nearby Glendale.

The church is "so welcoming and intergenerational," he says.

Patrick now encourages other young adult friends to move to Phoenix. "I think there's a certain energy associated with big cities," he says.

Like other cities trendy to groups of friends, Patrick says many young people have moved to Phoenix because of the social networks and the community at Trinity Mennonite.

"I can think of a few people who moved out because of grad school or a new job, but I'd say at least half move out for social reasons, [for] friends and community," he says.

Community aside, Patrick says he's "still not completely at home" with the urban lifestyle. For example, since Phoenix is so "spread out" and "carcentric," it's difficult for him to see his friends or attend events as regularly as he prefers.

"I love driving, or at least I used to think so, but I hate deadline with traffic everyday," he says. "I often want to take public transportation to make commuting more bearable, but the speed and accessibility of public transportation is poor because of the nature of a sprawling city."

His job is also in the opposite direction of church and friends. Unlike some urban transplants—who move first, job-search second—Patrick had a job lined up as a computer network engineer for a school district prior to the move.

He believes Phoenix has many job options for young people. "The city is growing faster than it's able to keep up, so new jobs are popping up all the time. Schools are desperate for teachers, and housing has been cheap in the far-out suburbs," he says.

Like Patrick, Tiffany Yoder says many of her peers feel pulled to cities for a change from a rural setting.

A 2006 Bluffton (Ohio) University graduate, Tiffany lived in Boston this past year and worked with Americorps.

"Not only are there more job opportunities and things to do," she says, "but I think some grads really wanted to get out of the typical rural Mennonite setting that many may have grown up in or at least spent numerous years living in."

She met most of her friends in Boston through work but has also connected through online social networking with friends from Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School who were also living in Boston.

Tiffany says church can also be a great way to get acquainted with a city and aid the adjustment, even if it doesn't happen immediately. "I didn't get involved with a church regularly until January," she says. "I moved in late August [of 2006]."

She and her roommate visited non-Mennonite churches at first, hoping to meet other young people, but found they desired a Mennonite community, so they attended a Sunday evening service in Cambridge with an older congregation.

With Bluffton University's new urban experience semester program in Pittsburgh, the number of Bluffton graduates in Pittsburgh may increase in coming years.

This fall nine Bluffton students will participate in the inaugural Pittsburgh Semester program, an off-campus program for regional Christian colleges, at the Pittsburgh Project on the city's North Side. Many Goshen College graduates and others have moved to Pittsburgh, either for graduate school or to participate in the MennoCorp Pittsburgh Urban Leadership Service Experience, a one-year program for college graduates.

According to Cindy Lapp, pastor at Hyattsville (Md.)Mennonite Church, the program of Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.—Washington Scholars Community Center—draws young people to D.C. either temporarily or more long-term.

If the Pittsburgh Semester functions as the Washington Scholars Community program does, young people from Bluffton might consider Pittsburgh an option for their futures.

Elise Derstine, who did not participate in the Washington Scholars Community Center, still chose to move to D.C. However, after three years, she says it's hard to remember exactly how she ended up there. She knew she wasn't ready for graduate school immediately after graduating from Goshen but wanted to work for a few years, and at that time D.C. seemed like a good fit for Adam, her fiancé, now spouse.

She and Adam also realized they had other college friends in the area—a popular appeal—and predicted an easy job-hunt in D.C. "We were right," she says. "D.C. is just about the best place to explore a career with the unlimited nonprofit organizations, federal government and several universities. … I think this is what brings many young people to D.C. in general—and usually only for a brief time."

Every year Elise has had to say goodbye to another group of friends who move on from D.C., but then a new group moves in—beginning the cycle again. She wonders how many Mennonites move to D.C. and stay for life; her impression is that many leave after a couple of years.

"I find myself planning to leave D.C., and it seems I've known that from the beginning … but we've already been here longer than most young people we know," Elise says.

Many of her friends are connected to Mennonites or work for organizations that regularly encounter Mennonites, like *Sojourners* magazine.

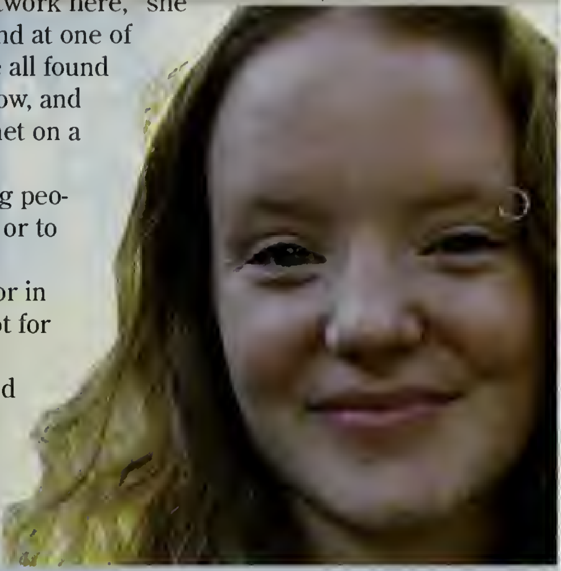
Most of the young Mennonites she meets live in her neighborhood, Mt. Pleasant, which consists of mixed-income people in the northwest quadrant of D.C., or Columbia Heights, a neighborhood in central D.C.

"We have our own little network here," she says. "Sometimes I look around at one of our gatherings and realize we all found each other in this city somehow, and rarely is it ever because we met on a Sunday morning."

Baltimore also draws young people for graduate school, MVS or to join their friends there. Amy Clemens, the MVS coordinator in Baltimore, says the "city is not for everyone," and she's known young people who have moved there but returned to their hometown because they weren't happy.

Others love Baltimore and its "overgrown, small-town" feeling, which is how many describe the city, she says.

Photo provided



Elise Derstine, Washington, D.C.

Some young people who attend North Baltimore Mennonite Church choose to make roots and become more involved in congregational life. At North Baltimore, and Mennonite churches in general, Amy says, there is an "expectation to participate," as it's small, not a megachurch.

There is a certain energy associated with big cities.

However, a young person must decide that it's "my church," not "my mom and dad's church," she says, for true involvement to happen.

Last spring, Elise and Adam started attending House Church, a Mennonite fellowship that has been gathering in D.C. for the past 30 years.

Prior to that, the Derstines spent a year at an ecumenical church but left after "realizing we had not formed meaningful relationships within the community."

This was her first experience at a non-Mennonite church and says she is still unsure how that affected her experience.

However, Elise says she feels a "strong attraction to church community at this time in [her] life, and I'm paying attention to that."

Anna Groff is assistant editor of The Mennonite.

A genuine

Thoughts from four pastors of urban churches

Photo provided

Young people bring hard questions and challenges.
—Ric Hudgens

Ric Hudgens: Chicago

Living in the city is simply "cool," one young person told Ric Hudgens, pastor at Reba Place Church in Evanston, Ill.

Ric says young people move to Chicago for graduate school, cultural life, diversity and the transportation system, which makes it possible to live without a car, attractive to many.

Ric says another young person told him that if New York City is "insane," than Chicago is "invigorating."

This also could be said for a service at Reba Place, a lively, intergenerational, family-oriented congregation—characteristics Ric says attract young people.

Churches near Northwestern University and North Park University tend to be dominated by graduate students, he says. But the young people at Reba Place want to see babies, families and older people.

Throughout the programming at Reba Place, the young people relate to all ages and are not segmented into a special young adult group.

"It's not very professional here, but they feel authentic and real," Ric says.

Young people also contribute to church life. This past winter a 90-year-old couple died. Before their deaths many young people visited them and provided meals. Ric says it brought young people comfort seeing a couple like this live for God and die peacefully.

Young people also bring hard questions and challenges, he says. They ask members at Reba Place to live out what they say they believe about economic, political and environmental issues. For example, one young person started a ministry of recycling bicycles by fixing up bikes salvaged from the police or garbage, then giving them away or selling them for a small price.

Ric says the church and fellowship allow young people to get involved immediately, and positions are not based on seniority. The church acknowledges that the young people may only attend Reba Place for several years, but that doesn't lessen their qualifications for responsibility. In fact, Ric sees it as an investment, as young people learn skills during their time at Reba Place that later "bear fruit." Some people may criticize young people for not giving money or enough time, but it's worth it for the church's future, he says.

Hugo Saucedo: San Antonio

Hugo Saucedo, Western District/South Central Conference youth pastor (Texas-based), says 9/11 and the beginning of the war in Iraq brought young people to his congregation, San Antonio Mennonite.

These people, many of them university students, did not grow up Mennonite but were looking for a community that believed in peace, especially during the war in Iraq.

These students were transient; they attended for a semester, then returned to their homes, but still a small group began. The first young adult small group started in the spring of 2002 with five people—three of whom were Mennonite Voluntary Service workers. The small group got together for meals, Hugo says. The MVSers at that time decided to stay in the city, and so did the next group. These people's friends visited during spring breaks. The visitors experienced the city and the church welcomed them, Hugo says. This began the trend of young people moving to San Antonio.

Now 30-35 people, ages 21-25, gather weekly, and older people join as informal mentors. Hugo describes it as "a grass-roots, organic kind of thing."

"That is what keeps people here," he says. These kinds of intergenerational activities work best when the young people start it, he says. They see the importance of having these connections across the ages.

Photo provided

pen door

by Anna Groff

Anna Groff is assistant editor of The Mennonite.

Cynthia Lapp: Washington

provided

Cynthia Lapp, pastor of Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church, admits to reading the alumni news from colleges and seeing names of Mennonite young people in the D.C. area she's never seen at church. However, she's "still impressed with the number of young people that do show up these days."

Cynthia remembers her youth when she came to D.C. right after college at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. She had a difficult time integrating her church, work and social experiences and imagines this is also a challenge for young people today.

"People don't really come to talk with me about it, but I assume that it's there," she says. "If I have a chance, I want to let people know that it's OK to ask those questions."

When Cynthia moved to Washington, she lived with Mennonite friends, some of whom really needed a break from church. She sensed they felt, I want to be involved, but don't bug me.

Now as a pastor, she sees young people at church and receives email inquiries about Hyattsville Mennonite or housing in the Washington area.

Cynthia says the church's Web site allows people to check out the church before attending—something that did not exist when she moved to Washington 20 years ago.

The older people in the congregation sometimes wonder if they should plan something special for the young people that attend. But like other pastors, Cynthia has heard that young people don't want specific programming.

"They want to be regular participants and connect to people of all ages," especially as they hang out with other young people all the time, she says.

[Young people] want to be regular participants and connect to people of all ages.—Cynthia Lapp

Rod Stafford: Portland, Ore.

Photo provided

Rod Stafford, pastor at Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church, says Portland is seen as a creative and beautiful place by many young people.

The urban growth boundaries, public transit, attention to environmental issues and opportunities for outdoor sports attract these young transplants.

"There's a critical mass with energy and other young adults," he says. People crave that sense of community in urban areas, he says.

People in their 20s, at least if they're healthy, often are figuring out who they are, Rod says. In general, cities give a lot of space and opportunity to figure those things out.

Faith is one of those things.

Oregon is considered a "none zone," the state where, when asked about their religious affiliation, more people answer "none" than anywhere else in the country.

Since Christendom is dying, Rod says, the church has to find a way to be an alternative culture in a setting that doesn't embrace or support what we're about. "In the Northwest there's a head start on it," he adds.

Rod says the "intersection of faith and life is different [here] than in a small farming community in Indiana or Virginia."

He is aware of the many young adult Mennonites in Portland, and while not all of them regularly attend church, he says, he has connected with many of them outside church services.

"Things or programs targeted to [young people] don't exactly work. Taking them out to dinner does," he says.

Rod wants people to feel welcome at Portland Mennonite Church, no matter where they are with their faith. When people are about 30, they tend to get married, have children and settle into a church, he says. But before then, young people are often at a "unique era and stage in life."

Growing up, he found it helpful to know he always had a home with parents who supported him. "It offered constancy when I was trying to figure out who I was," he says. "[The] Mennonite church can serve that purpose."

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Photo provided

Making Manhattan possible

Congregation provides affordable housing

In an intensely busy and competitive place—Manhattan—one church has intentionally provided a space and community for young adults through Menno House, a townhouse owned by a local Mennonite congregation, Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship (MMF).

Lowell Brown, the manager of Menno House, says the community at the house "takes the loneliness out of moving to a big city" and has financial strengths with the affordable housing.

He says many professionals can't even afford to live in Manhattan, but people at MMF are "committed to providing housing for volunteers and nonprofit employees."

"I wish there were dozens of churches doing this. … It's a unique and effective way of addressing one of the city's most glaring needs," he says.

Lowell is proud of the church for addressing the need for affordable housing—despite the real estate in this extremely lucrative housing market.

The house primarily provides affordable, low-cost housing for volunteers, students and nonprofit workers, but three bedrooms are available for overnight guests, and the church also uses the house for office and meeting space.

Relationships naturally form through Menno House. "When there are so many different people in the same space, connections just happen," Lowell says.

"Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship has been good about making opportunities for community but not forcing people to be involved," he says. "We want honest relationships more than just bodies in the pews. And we're a small congregation, so we really do want bodies in the pews. Usually it works out pretty well—currently about three-fourths of the house residents attend church with some regularity."

House residents gather for a weekly meal, and a committee of church members meets with the Mennonite Voluntary Service workers. They are reading Ron Sider's *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*.

One couple started a Bible study in their apartment that draws people who may not feel as comfortable attending Sunday church services at MMF, Lowell says.

Through his work Lowell sees the newcomers to the city and what they face. For some people, he says, noise is a problem. The front of the house can be pretty loud, he says. Other people find directions around the city difficult.

"I still notice that I don't get enough sky," says Lowell, who moved to New York City in 2002. He makes a point of walking in parks and on the beach.

"The great thing about New York is that so much is accessible by public transportation," he says, "but it takes a little bit of doing."—*Anna Groff*

Sometimes Mennonites get stuck thinking of farmland as Christian and cities as scary and evil.

Why are we attracted to cities?

For the same reasons people of all ages and faiths are attracted to cities: There are more options for employment, education, entertainment, socializing and worship. I wouldn't say the quality is better or worse—for instance, New York probably has the same percentage of terrible restaurants as any small town—but there are so many restaurants here that there are many more good ones, too. And there is definitely more variety.

I was attracted to New York partly because of my concern for the environment (a faith issue, I believe). I don't own a car, and here everything is accessible by walking and public transportation. Real estate is expensive, so people learn to live with less space. Since many people live in row houses or apartments, heating is more efficient in the winter. New York recycles paper, metal, glass and some plastic once a week, and there's an organization that composts our kitchen scraps four times a week.

I also like the intimate feel of many New York neighborhoods. I can walk down the street and buy milk at the corner store, a birthday card at the next shop, a slice of pizza at the next one and a gallon of paint after that. And if I don't have enough money for the paint, Roger will probably say, "Oh, that's OK, you can just give me the rest the next time you come in." Since Mennonite communities began in rural areas in North America, Mennonites sometimes get stuck thinking of farmland as Christian and cities as scary and evil. But it's interesting that when you read the New Testament, the early church got its start in towns and cities. Those were the places where people gathered to discuss new ideas, and Christianity was a crazy new idea. I'm glad there are so many Mennonite churches in New York because this is a place where Mennonites can thrive.—*Lowell Brown*

Seminary students feel drawn to the West Coast.

Pasadena, a city in Los Angeles County, Calif., may be an exception to the trend of young adults migrating in groups.

Joel Shenk, a Mennonite student at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, says the young Mennonites in Pasadena made decisions to move there independently of each other, thought "similar themes" attracted them to the city.

"Mennonite universities do a great job of expanding students' worldviews," he says. "Once that process takes place, it is appealing to live in an environment that continues to broaden … our lives."

David Stutzman, another student at Fuller who spent four years in Germany after graduating from Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Va., felt attracted to the diversity of Pasadena and Los Angeles.

David married Rebekka, a woman from Germany, and had plans to return with her to the United States for graduate school.

He found Fuller attractive for the intercultural studies program and the urban location. He knew he did not want to return immediately to a "homogeneous" Mennonite community where Rebekka would be known as "David's wife."

He says he feels called to church work but desired the urban, multicultural environment of L.A. following his years spent overseas.

He moved to Pasadena to study and live out his faith and identity in a different context from what he grew up in and believes other young people have similar feelings. "[Young people] are not moving to cities to leave the church but to remain in the church," he says.

David says many young people feel the church is "rubbing shoulders" with the world rather than pulling back into its own communities.

While cities may represent the "changing of the times," it is not "our salvation," he adds. Rural and urban areas simply have a different set of issues to work at.

Joel names one issue he faces on a daily basis: living as a responsible citizen—a key aspect of faith and discipleship for young adults. He also mentions globalization, its positive and negative aspects, as something he encounters.

"Once you know about the negative aspects of globalization," he says, "such as exploitation of the poor, injustice, neocolonialism … you can no longer go back to living like it doesn't exist."

Joel says people in cities must resist "becoming desensitized and hardened against the needs of others."

However, Joel likes "living an a place of influence." He says: "No one is the village idiot in urban areas, so to speak. And there is less emphasis or expectation for conformity and homogeneity … people are more openminded."

Alethia Bailey, also a student at Fuller and a graduate of EMU, says she wanted a new setting, "out of the Mennonite world," and to join the intercultural studies program.

She also knew other young Mennonites interested in moving out west and attending Fuller. Since her move, she's watched more Mennonites come to Fuller—many of them graduates from Mennonite colleges. A group of Mennonites meets once a week on campus to talk and connect.

Alethia grew up in Toronto and experienced many cities on the East Coast, so she wanted a city on the West Coast. What she knew of Pasadena, such as the "quaint" parts of the city and the close proximity to outdoor activities, excited her.

Los Angeles, on the other hand, was not attractive, but she says the area serves as a great case study for seminary classes when discussing social, political and theological issues.—*Anna Groff*

This article is available as a podcast at www.The Mennonite.org

Finding diversity in Pasadena

Photo provided

[Young people] are not moving to cities to leave the church but to remain in the church. —David Stutzman

How worship develops young leaders at First Mennonite Church of San Francisco

From seeke

by Sheri Hostetler

In the early 1990s, I was what you might call a "recovering Mennonite." At 29, I had felt alienated from the church of my childhood for several years. I had too many questions about faith, too many seemingly unorthodox opinions. But I longed to connect with God and a spiritual community in a deeper way, I still held strongly to many of the ethical teachings of my childhood faith and I couldn't imagine being anything but a Mennonite.

In this frame of mind, I first walked through the doors of First Mennonite Church of San Francisco in March 1992. Immediately the church's "seeker friendliness" felt like a good fit. People didn't have all the answers yet worshiped together joyfully.

Within months the worship committee asked me to help lead worship during Lent. Though I had recently graduated from seminary, I had never before led a congregation in worship. I loved it and—thanks to the mentoring of my co-worship leader, Doug Basinger—found I was good at it. In another few months I was invited onto the worship committee and eventually became its chair.

There's an authenticity in our worship that appeals to young adults
—Pat Plude

Three years after I first attended First Mennonite as a "recovering Mennonite," I had not only refound my faith but felt called to the ministry. Such is the work of the Spirit, and such is the particular ministry of First Mennonite Church of San Francisco to young adults.

My story is not atypical at First Mennonite. In our 31-year history, more than a dozen young adults (many of them members of our Mennonite Voluntary Service unit) have gone on to seminary and been ordained, most within the Mennonite church. Two women in their 20s with me at First Mennonite are now pastoral colleagues. Dozens of others have become lay leaders at First Mennonite and other congregations. Currently young adults in their 20s chair almost half our church's committees, including a capital campaign committee.

At a time when many denominations, including ours, are trying to figure out how to attract more young adults to churches and train them for leadership, people have been asking us, How do you do what you do?

Partly the answer lies in having a Mennonite Voluntary Service unit. "Everyone who is involved in our congregation and who was in MVS has taken on a leadership position here," says Russ Schmidt, local program coordinator for our unit. "You don't have to look far in our congregation to see that the people who have been involved in service of some kind—MVS or Mennonite Central Committee—are going to be leaders."

But perhaps most importantly, we have (almost without knowing it) created a vehicle of leadership development through our approach to worship. It starts with worship that young seekers can relate to because of its honesty, says Pat Plude, our congregation's minister of worship arts. "There's an authenticity, a truth telling that happens in our worship that appeals to young adults," she says. "We use Christian language, but it's put in a context of authentic sharing and storytelling that gives that language real-world value for young people who are trying to figure out so much about their faith and how it works in the world."

For instance, we regularly ask people to tell their spiritual journey, during which they freely admit to doubts about basic tenets of the faith, such as the meaning of Jesus' atonement. In a Lenten series on money, one of our members, who was giving a sermon on living ethically with wealth, told exactly how much money he had inherited and what he did with it. During a sharing time after a sermon on Cesar Chavez, who started the United Farmworkers Union, one of our members stood up and challenged us on whether we were really committed to justice for the people who pick the food we eat everyday. This sort of honesty in our sharing time is not unusual. All this combines to create a safe place where young adults want to bring their gifts to worship because they know their honesty won't make people uncomfortable, Plude says.

Having created that safe space, we then regularly invite young adults to take significant leadership roles during worship. They plan and lead worship, lead singing, give reflections and faith stories. Young adults new to our congregation realize there is a meaningful place for them and their gifts in worship and that the pastor and other "old-timers" will step back and allow them to step for-

to leader

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ward to lead. They also realize they don't need to have it all together faith-wise to lead a congregation in worship. Not only is it OK to be a seeker at First Mennonite, we invite people to leadership while they are still seekers. This congregation's acceptance of my doubts and its willingness to embrace my leadership gifts led me both to a mature faith and to my vocation as pastor.

Besides a seeker-friendly worship culture, we also have a clear process for young adults to become involved in the worship life of the church. Every fall we invite people to fill out a "things I'd enjoy" form that lists the many opportunities to be involved in at the church. Based on that, we first invite young adults to participate in worship in less anxiety-producing ways, such as reading Scripture or singing in a choir. If they seem energized by this, we may ask them to give a reflection on a Scripture passage or lead worship. Finally, young adults who show an interest in worship are invited to serve on the worship committee.

Throughout this process, we make sure young adults have adequate mentoring. As pastor, I have coached many young adults giving their first reflection in front of a congregation. Pat Plude has mentored many of our young adult song leaders via one-to-one teaching and through a Sunday school class called "Song Leading for Beginners." We pair new worship and song leaders with experienced ones, who guide them through the process and offer valuable feedback. Finally, instruction in worship leading is a regular part of our worship committee, which usually has a large percentage of young adults on it. This year, out of a nine-member committee, five are in their 20s.

Mentoring future worship leaders has happened at even a younger age at First Mennonite. A year ago we asked our elementary children to lead some part of worship, such as the call to worship or offering prayer, with the adult worship leader. We also asked our older children to read Scripture. All the children are offered guidance by an adult who coaches them on pacing, mike placement and other details of public speaking.

But how does worship leading translate into leadership in general? More than anything, good worship leading is a process of spiritual formation that instills the character of a leader into a young adult. "The first thing worship leading teaches is that it's not about you," says Rebecca Slough, associate professor of worship and the arts at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and a former pastor at First Mennonite. "When you are worship leading well, you learn that your responsibility is to be in front of the congregation in such a way that invites the congregation together for the sake of connecting with God."

David Wieand, a former MVSer who is now a member of the pastoral care committee and chair of our MVS capital campaign committee, found numerous leadership development benefits to being involved in worship. "Most people have an aversion to being up in front of people. But over time, through practice and trial and error, the anxiety tends to lessen, and confidence starts to build," especially, he says, when constructive criticism and positive feedback are offered.

David says he also learned the rudiments of project management through planning worship. Coordinating the parts of a service, contacting people to do tasks and doing this all within a specific time frame were new experiences for him at the time. "Even having the confidence to pick up the phone and say, 'Hey, would you be willing to do the children's story,' needing to do that sort of negotiation or influencing on a minor scale was a learning experience. Those small steps all helped me build the confidence that I can do it."

Now 15 years later, I am what you might call a "recovered Mennonite." At 44, I find myself involved in Mennonite Church USA as a pastor, a member of the conference pastoral leadership committee and as an active mentor of new generations of Mennonites. I still have questions about faith and some unorthodox opinions. But I have a spiritual community that helps me connect with God and holds me accountable to the church's ethical teachings. I still can't imagine being anything but a Mennonite.

Good worship leading is a process of spiritual formation that instills the character of a leader into a young adult.

Sheri Hostetler is pastor of First Mennonite Church of San Francisco.

The idol in our midst

Steve Steiner is a member of Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Today I wept. I had just read these words in the *Jerusalem Post*: "The sleeping giant of Christian Zionism has awakened. There are 50 million Christians standing up and applauding the State of Israel." This was written by Pastor John Hagee, founder of Christians United for Israel.

Does Pastor Hagee count me in that number? Through my tears I realized that American Christians have made the state of Israel an idol. I shuddered at the reference to Israel as "the only democracy in the Middle East."

What part of our Lord's teachings are we willing to ignore if there are 50 million Christians applauding the state of Israel? My mind went to the people living in this land called Israel. Let me delineate several different classes of people:

- There are those who are part of the "Law of Return" or "Aliya." Proving that a grandmother was Jewish allows them to move to Israel from anywhere in the world, receiving full citizenship and special compensation. Yet native Palestinians whose ancestors have lived in the land for hundreds of years are now considered aliens.
- Those who have immigrated as Jews over the last 50 years have full citizenship.
- Those who are of Palestinian ethnicity but did not leave the land in the 1948 war have restricted citizenship.
- Those from East Jerusalem and the Golan. After the 1967 war, Israel made their land part of the state. These Palestinians do not have citizenship, only a paper document verifying that they have the right to live in the state of Israel. There are 500,000 noncitizen people living on land that has been in their family for generations.
- A fifth group consists of those living with a 25-foot wall passing through their West Bank property. Their homes are in a portion of Israel, unable to commute to their own land or to travel in Israel.

What part of Scripture are we willing to ignore?

Is this the modern day Israel that 50 million of us are applauding as a model of democracy? Further complicating the issue is the area of the West Bank, the region east of the state of Israel to the Jordan River, taken over in the 1967 war by Israel, which defines this area as Administrative Territory, while most of the world calls it "occupied" territory. Two million Palestinians live there, restricted by security checkpoints in traveling between their own villages and regions. The new wall divides neighbors and regions, making travel virtually impossible. They have no citizenship and no way to travel or leave the area.

The Gaza Strip is a small area seven miles wide by 27 miles long, adjoining the Mediterranean Sea and Egypt. About 1.5 million Palestinians live in this small enclave, often referred to as the world's largest prison. Israel controls all the borders, the border with Egypt being the only one that Gazans have occasional access to.

I am reminded of an established church in the recent past whose government marked, labeled and finally massacred some of its citizens. I wonder how Israel can have forgotten so soon what happened to the Jews in Europe.

I think about the teachings of the Old Testament. Is it possible that 50 million American Christians have forgotten the Scriptures?

The words of Jeremiah 7:5-7: "If you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly act justly with one another, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, then I will dwell with you in this place, in the land I gave of old to your ancestors forever and ever."

Jesus taught in Matthew 25:45: "Just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me."

What part of Scripture are we willing to ignore to allow these conditions to continue in Israel, Golan, Gaza and the West Bank?

God must be angry at the misguided use of his name to make aliens in the land through the "Law of Return." Lord have mercy on those of us who do not speak against this injustice. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **10 days in Katrina land**—Everett Thomas
- **How Katrina is changing MDS**—Everett Thomas

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Klassen named MCC executive director

Appointment follows her eight years as executive director of MCC Ontario.

Arli Klassen has been chosen as the next executive director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), taking leadership of the organization's relief, development and peace-building work in more than 50 countries.

Klassen comes to the position after serving for the past eight years as the executive director of MCC Ontario.

She will be the first woman to serve as the executive director of MCC in the organization's 87-year history.

"I'm very excited for MCC with the hiring of Arli," says Ron Dueck, MCC's board chair. "Her work in Ontario has shown her to be an excellent administrator, forging strong links with the churches and developing leadership in visioning and guiding MCC in its mission."

Klassen's appointment follows 16 years of service with MCC in Africa, the United States and Canada. She first served with MCC in Lesotho and was MCC's country representative there from 1991 to 1994.

She then worked in MCC's Akron, Pa., office as a connecting peoples resource person and an assistant director of Africa programs before becoming executive director of MCC Ontario.

Klassen and her husband, Keith Regehr, are members of Breslau (Ont.) Mennonite Church. They have two daughters who are both university students in Ontario.

Klassen earned a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Toronto and a bachelor's degree in sociology and religious studies from Mennonite Brethren Bible College and the University of Winnipeg. As a candidate for executive director, Klassen emphasized the importance of MCC's relationship to its constituency of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches.

"My vision for MCC is that we remain focused on our identity as a Mennonite/Brethren in Christ ministry while inviting others to support and partner with us in whatever work the churches are asking us to do," Klassen wrote in a letter to the search committee.

After accepting the position, Klassen said, "MCC is a strong ministry facing new changes and challenges, and I am eagerly anticipating walking with the whole of MCC—all the churches locally and globally, partners, donors, volunteers and staff—in moving into the future."

Dueck announced Klassen's selection Sept. 14 to MCC staff members in the United States and Canada. She is expected to replace Bert Lobe, MCC's interim executive director, by next spring.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

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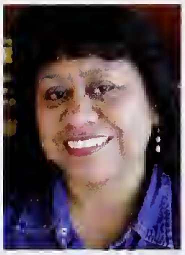
Hispanic education office staff named

Mennonite Education Agency announces associate director, staff associate.


Violeta Ajquejay

Rafael Barahona

Tony Brun

Carlos Romero, executive director of Mennonite Education Agency, has announced two new staff appointments in MEA's Hispanic Pastoral and Leadership Education office. Rafael Barahona of Goshen, Ind., will lead HPLE as a new MEA associate director. Tony Brun of Washington has been named staff associate.

Barahona and Brun began their duties Oct. 1, joining Instituto Biblico Anabautista assistant director Violeta Ajquejay as MEA HPLE staff. The congregationally based IBA, which has served about 1,000 students, officially became an MEA program March 1. The HPLE office operates in partnership with Iglesia Menonita Hispana (IMH) and Mennonite Mission Network.

IBA is one aspect of HPLE. HPLE's goals are to coordinate and provide pastoral and theological education to maintain and revitalize Anabaptist identity in IMH congregations, prepare Hispanic Mennonites to be congregational and broader church leaders, provide tools to people already in leadership positions and promote Mennonite higher education among Hispanic youth.

Barahona received a bachelor's degree in Hispanic ministries with a minor in intercultural studies from Goshen (Ind.) College, and a master of arts degree in theological studies and Christian education from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Ind.

Since 2005, he has served as director of Leadership Programs and Pastoral Connections at AMBS. Prior to that, he was director of the Hispanic Education in Theology and Leadership program at Goshen College.

Barahona will continue his AMBS duties as director of Pastoral Studies Distance Education and with Journey: A Conference-based Leadership Development program for the next two years. In that interval, his MEA work will be three-quarters time. It will include discovering and developing higher education opportunities (local and distance) for Hispanic Mennonites, leading IBA, promoting Mennonite educational institutions within IMH and the culture of call among students who choose non-theological education, and fund-raising.

Brun has undergraduate degrees in pastoral ministry and theology from Baptist Theological Seminary of Uruguay and Latin American Biblical Seminary in Costa Rica and master's degrees in Latin American studies and pastoral ministry from SBL and National University of Costa Rica. He is completing doctoral studies in the Ministry in Mission and Leadership program of Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago. At present, Brun is a professor at the Servant Leadership School-Festival Center in Washington.

In his one-quarter-time HPLE position, he will serve as an instructor and resource person for IBA, facilitating workshops, intensive courses and seminars, among other duties.

Ajquejay has served the church since 1988, when she began work as an intern with the Commission on Home Ministries of the former General Conference Mennonite Church while completing her studies at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

HPLE staff will work from MEA's main office in Goshen (Barahona), the Mennonite Church USA Newton Office (Ajquejay) and Washington (Brun). —*Mennonite Church USA*

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History essay contest winners announced

First place awarded to Tobin Miller Shearer's paper on inter-racial marriage.

Inter-racial marriage and a German mythologist and nationalist were the subjects of the winning entries in this year's John Horsch Mennonite Historical Essay Contest, sponsored by the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee.

"Looking Past Legality: Inter-racial Marriage and the Mennonite Church, 1930-1971" by Tobin Miller Shearer took first place in the graduate school/seminary category. A doctoral student at Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., Shearer used the 1954 wedding and marriage of Gerald Hughes, an African-American, and Annabelle Conrad, a white, to examine denominational attitudes toward the most intimate of interpersonal relations even while advocating for racial equality.

"In comparison to other race-related issues, whether congregational integration, social equality or civil rights legislation, the topic of inter-racial marriage troubled white Mennonites for a longer period, proved more difficult to discuss and involved fewer appeals to Scripture," Shearer wrote.

Second place in the graduate school/seminary category went to Joshua Weaver, a student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., for his paper "Awakening to the Realities of Conflict: Mennonite Board of Missions in Israel."

Holly Scott from Penn State University at Harrisburg was awarded third place for "Doves of a Different Feather: Mennonites and the Antiwar Movement During Vietnam."

In the undergraduate category, Braden Hiebner from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., took the top prize for "Reintegrating the Life of Wilhelm Mannhardt: A Nineteenth-Century Mennonite, Mythologist, Nationalist, Pietist, and Liberal."

"It was very well written. ... It was, for me at least, a most unusual topic," said judge Lee Roy Berry of Hiebner's paper.—*Mennonite Church USA*

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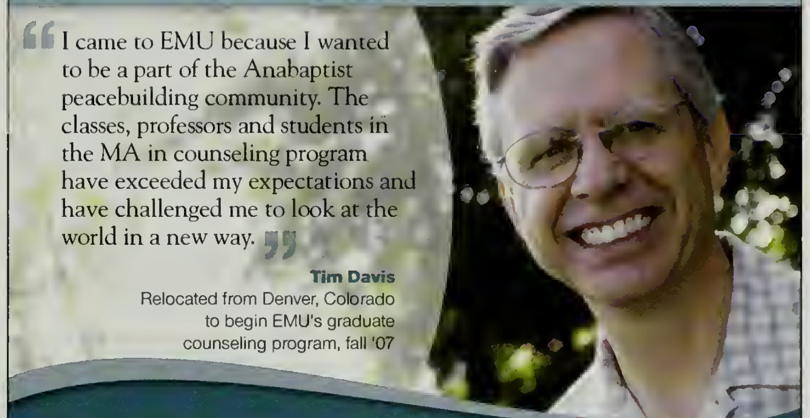

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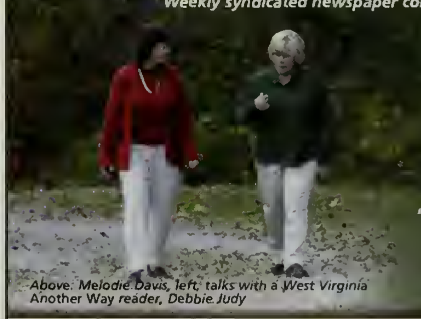

Above: Melodie Davis, left, talks with a West Virginia Another Way reader, Debbie Judy

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Delegation sees crisis, hope in Zimbabwe

Group from Mennonite World Conference visits Brethren in Christ Churches.

Dan Nighswander

Yvonne Snider Nighswander plays with children in a displaced people project outside Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

The Brethren in Christ Church (BICC) in Zimbabwe is alive and strong. It has capable leaders and provides for future leadership through its Bible school and theological college. Its annual conference, with the theme "Keeping Our Faith in Times of Trouble," modeled hope.

The people are resilient, wise, hard-working, joyful, full of patience and grace. They say of themselves, "We are surviving."

These are some of the observations reported by the eight-member, international Koinonia Delegation sent to Zimbabwe by Mennonite World Conference. From Aug. 17-26 they visited churches, institutions and conversed with people at the national conference. The delegation also met with the newly formed BICC Peace and Justice Committee, representatives of the Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice and with Mennonite Central Committee staff.

The delegation found a country in escalating crisis, with overwhelming shortages of food, water and fuel, power outages, inflation variously reported from 5,000 to 7,000 percent, record unemployment and low salaries. The visitors saw long lines of people waiting their turn to get water and to buy staples, with no guarantee of availability.

"I have traveled to Zimbabwe once a year for six years," says Pakisa Tshimika, leader of the delegation. "I have seen small changes in the past, but the socioeconomic consequences of government decisions in the past few months were worse than any of us anticipated."

The delegation attended the 30-second annual BIC conference at Matopo Mission Aug. 22-26. Organizers had expected fewer than 2,000 people, but attendance climbed to 3,600, the second highest ever.

Danisa Ndlovu, bishop of BICC and president-elect of MWC, preached the conference sermon on "Keeping Our Faith in Difficult Times."

Despite their own oppression, BICC people manage to look beyond themselves. One congregation is supporting 300 orphans and widows. The BICC and other Christian churches in Bulawayo care for many internally displaced people following the government's Operation Clean-up a few years ago.

The delegation noted that the church has a clear sense of needing to speak to government on behalf of the people but agrees that public challenges and loud protests will only result in more harshness. They have little faith that the election in 2008 will resolve anything.

"I observed a common, underlying reality: the people of Zimbabwe are marking time. … There is a sense that all of life is in suspension, but still there is hope," says Yvonne Snider Nighswander.

The resilience of the people generated much discussion among delegation members, who also saw a nagging fear. The fact that 23,000 people were killed by the government in the 1980s remains fresh in people's memories.

The BICC pastors requested that the delegation share what they have seen and heard and that they pray for the people of Zimbabwe, for good rains, that God will soften the heart of the country's president and for peace and justice.

The delegation presented a gift of $15,000, which the church decided to use for relief. A committee in Zimbabwe will determine details.

MCC has an emergency fund set up for Zimbabwe. Donations can be sent to: 21 S. 12th Street, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500.—*Ferne Burkhardt, with files from Koinonia Delegation members, of Mennonite World Conference*

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Health access initiative director named

Keith Harder to lead project to provide health insurance for church workers

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership announces the appointment of Keith Harder, Hillsboro, Kan., as project director for the health access for church workers initiative.

Delegates adopted, by a vote of 93 percent, a resolution calling on the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board to establish a collaborative process among all parts of Mennonite Church USA that would result in a plan. Harder's appointment is the first step in following this directive.

The plan would provide health insurance access for all eligible congregational church workers. Current estimates of uninsured pastors range from 65 to 100 of the 1,300 pastors of Mennonite Church USA.

The churchwide conversation on health-care access began at Atlanta 2003 with a broad focus on health care in the United States. The current focus seeks to establish practices that support congregational leadership and offer an example of mutual aid. Other insurance pools of agencies and schools will be invited to participate. Several, including Mennonite Mutual Aid and the Mennonite Church USA Employee Health Plan (Executive Leadership and Mennonite Mission Network staff), have already expressed strong interest in joining the initiative.

Harder has served for eight years on Executive Leadership staff as director of Congregational and Ministerial Leadership for Mennonite Church USA. He also served as a pastor for 28 years. While the access initiative will demand the majority of Harder's time, he will also complete several projects related to denominational minister efforts that support area conference ministers. Marlene Kropf of Elkhart, Ind., will serve as interim director of Executive Leadership's Congregational and Ministerial Leadership staff.

"We are fortunate to have Keith's knowledge, relationships and energy to lead the access initiative for church workers," says Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA. "This work will address a basic need for church leaders, and it will help us determine what kind of church we are called to be, establishing the extent to which we can pull together for the good of all."

In this role, Harder will focus his efforts at being a project developer and leader, as well as a spokesperson for the larger meaning of this initiative. Harder already has established a 12-person reference group that meets in early October.

"This challenging project provides an opportunity to address the health-care access needs of pastors and church workers and, in the process, shape what kind of a church we will be in the future," Harder says. "Pray for those of us who will be giving ourselves to this project that we might carefully listen to the church and to God's leading."—*Mennonite Church USA*

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Pizza-making fosters faith in Nepal

Top of the World, a small business, provides jobs for local Nepali women.

Few people connect Nepali cuisine to frozen pizzas and tater tots. Yet when Reena Thapa goes to work, she stands at a counter, smoothing bright red sauce over eight circles of pale pizza dough.

Thapa works at Top of the World, a small business named in honor of Nepal, whose borders encompass eight of the world's 10 tallest peaks. Her experience has taught her more than how to assemble frozen pizzas or fry aalu chop, a spicy local version of tater tots. Thapa and her fellow employees learn to take responsibility and practice integrity in the workplace.

The greatest reward is seeing these women both grow in their own faith and also draw others to faith through the changed lives that these others see. —Bethsaba Nafziger

They also have a chance to discover and explore faith in a safe, nonthreatening setting.

When she began working at Top of the World, Thapa, a devout Hindu intent on working toward a higher rebirth, frequently fasted and offered penance. Born and raised in the village by an alcoholic father and an indifferent mother, she was treated as a second-class citizen because of her gender and low caste. As a result of her social status, she never received treatment for a correctable hearing problem.

Slicing potatoes alongside Bethsaba Nafziger gave Thapa an opportunity to dissect her faith as well. Nafziger, who serves in Nepal through Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Central Committee, shared openly of her convictions but did not push her faith. She did, however, use her knowledge as a part-time nurse to arrange the minor operation needed to improve Thapa's hearing.

Top of the World's kitchen provides jobs for local women in a safe, clean environment. In a country where unemployment in the formal sector hovers close to 50 percent, many young Nepali women are lured to neighboring countries by the promise of a job. When they arrive, they discover that the promised job is working in a brothel against their will. In some regions, Nepali women are prized for their lighter skin that brings higher prices from clients.

Dale Nafziger

Janaki, an employee, puts pizza dough into the oven at Top of the World, a home business in Nepal.

"It is a national tragedy that is played out every day, in front of our very eyes," says Dale Nafziger, Bethsaba's husband.

Bethsaba Nafziger began running the business out of her home four years ago. Inspired by a United Mission to Nepal frozen French fries project, Nafziger worked with tater tots, which use up the waste portion of the potato not large enough to cut into fries. About one year ago, they began pizza production.

In June, Top of the World produced 90 frozen pizzas, 150 pounds of frozen French fries and 20 pounds of tater tots and aalu chop. By September, these numbers should have doubled, says Dale Nafziger, citing the summer monsoon season as the reason for slower business. Since an abundance of vendors already sell traditional treats that many locals enjoy, Top of the World's products aim at a specific niche market—upper-class Nepalis and resident expatriates.

About two years ago, Thapa accepted Christ and soon thereafter married Prakash Thapa, another believer in the community. They are actively involved in the local church—a newly established congregation of 40 that dedicated their newly completed building on July 29.

"The greatest reward is seeing these women both grow in their own faith and also draw others to faith through the changed lives that these others see," Bethsaba Nafziger says.—*Mimi Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network*

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CALENDAR

Lancaster Mennonite School and the **Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society** are co-sponsoring a ***Nickel Mines Memorial Concert*** at the LMS Fine Arts Center on Oct. 21, at 3 p.m. (not Oct. 20 as announced earlier). The event will observe the one-year anniversary of the Nickel Mines tragedy when five Amish school girls were killed. The concert will include 1994 LMS graduate Frances Miller with the Canadian duo of composer/pianist Carol Weaver, music professor at Conrad Grebel University College, and singer/song writer Rebecca Campbell. More information is available from the Society at 717-393-9745.

WORKERS

Smoker, Art ended a two-year term as transitional pastor at Frazer Mennonite Church, Frazer, Pa. on July 15. He began a a half-time, four-month term as interim pastor at Asheville Mennonite Church, Asheville, N.C., on Sept. 1.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Eby, Kate Marie, Sept. 6, to Rod and Paula Hershberger Eby, Hartville, Ohio.

Garboden, Elijah Lee, Aug. 23, to Rebekah Garboden, Goshen, Ind.

Gingerich, Leighton Ray, Sept. 2, to Ryan and Alison Harris Gingerich, Elkhart, Ind.

Hastings, Grace Marie, Aug. 2, to Steve and Sarah Chupp Hastings, Bryan, Ohio.

Kauffman, Anna Sophia, Sept. 2, to Aaron and Laura Souder Kauffman, Bogotá, Colombia.

Lopez, Andrew James, Jr., Sept. 9, to Andrew and Bridget Lopez, Green Lane, Pa.

Martin, Bryan Isaiah, Sept. 4, to Craig and Krista Martin, Harrisonburg, Va.

Roth, Leah Ellen, Sept. 4, to Lynn and Anita Nafziger Roth, Wauseon, Ohio.

Schiedel, Benjamin Klassen, June 21, to Bob and Lisa Klassen Schiedel, Drayton, Ontario.

Stout, Avery Emerson, Oct. 26, 2003, received for adoption on Aug. 2, by Bryan and Mindi Landis Stout, Telford, Pa.

Thomas, Daniel Lee, Aug. 27, to Matt and Kristen Beiler Thomas, Waynesboro, Va.

Troyer, Malakai Osborne, Sept. 12, to Marty and Hannah Osborne Troyer, Goshen, Ind.

Umble, Grant Jordan, Sept. 4, to Brandon and Rhonda Felpel Umble, Lancaster, Pa.

Wang, Thomas Lee-Hong, Sept. 5, to Leng-Sui and Rhonda Kanagy Wang, Waynesboro, Va.

Wyse, Martha Ann, Sept. 12, to Ben and Anna Wyse, Harrisonburg, Va.

Yoder, Lucía Salomé, Aug. 19, to Darrin and Julie Aeschliman Yoder, Honduras.

MARRIAGES

Anderson/Yoder: Rob Anderson, Staunton, Va., and Mary Yoder, Salem, Ore., Aug. 4, in Salem.

Bergstrom/Walton: Candice Ann "C'Ann" Bergstrom, Inola, Okla., and Matt Walton, Inola, Aug. 25, at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola.

Emery/Lucking: Kendra Emery, Lancaster, Pa., and Eric Lucking, Hershey, Pa., Aug. 25, at Stumptown Mennonite Church, Bird-in-Hand, Pa.

Hagey/Morgan: Elizabeth Hagey, Lansdale, Pa., and Jared Morgan, Pinto, Md., Aug. 18, at Dock Woods Fisher Auditorium, Lansdale.

Hostetler/Maurer: Jason Hostetler, Orrville, Ohio, and Sara Maurer, Orrville, Sept. 1, at Orrville Mennonite Church.

Kuhns/Wright: Marcos Kuhns, Colorado Springs, Colo., and Bethany Wright, Riverside, Calif., July 21, at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp, Divide, Colo.

Lantz/Wentorf: Eric Lantz, Paoli, Ind., and Erin Wentorf, Goshen, Ind., July 21, at the home of the bride.

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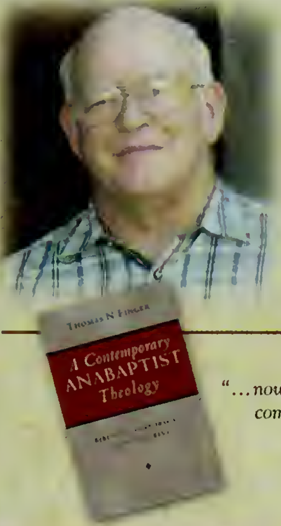

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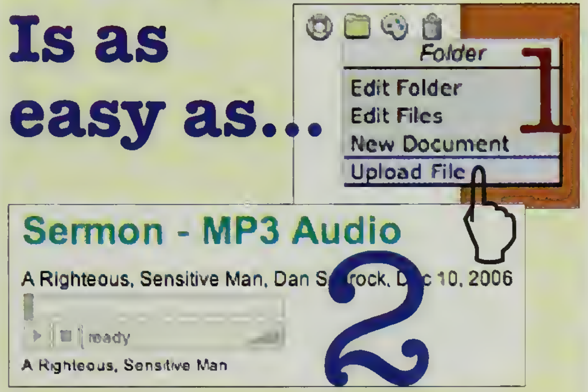
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Lehman/Schwartz: Angie Lehman, Goshen, Ind., and Andrew Schwartz, Sarasota, Fla., Aug. 4, at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Mathias/Showalter: Chris Mathias, Broadway, Va., and Karena Showalter, Broadway, Aug. 25, at Zion Mennonite Church, Broadway.

Mawhiney/Klingenberg: Allison Mawhiney, Olathe, Kan., and Grant Klingenberg, Peabody, Kan., March 13 at Grace United Methodist Church, Olathe, Kan.

Miller/Souder: Seth Miller, Sarasota, Fla., and Kristen Souder, Telford, Pa., Aug. 11, at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Miller/Swartzendruber: Tyson Joe Miller and Rachel Dawn Swartzendruber, Sept. 2, at Richmond, Iowa.

Nofziger/Sprunger: Erica Nofziger, Archbold, Ohio, and Josh Sprunger, St. Louis, Mo., Aug. 11, at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Smoker/Thomas: Crystal Smoker, Lancaster, Pa., and Michael Thomas, Bradley, N.J., Sept. 8, at Lauxmont Farms, Wrightville, Pa.

Swartzendruber/Taylor: H.D. Swartzendruber, Harrisonburg, Va., and Faye Hooley Byers Taylor, Hubbard, Ore., Sept. 1, at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

DEATHS

Bachman, Earl, 91, Wayland, Iowa, died Sept. 1. Spouse: Frieda Hirschy. Parents: Arthur and Ida Sutter Bachman. Children: William A., Doyle E., Kathleen A. Showalter; eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 6 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Burky, Glendora Schrock, 87, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died Sept. 10. Spouse: Lloyd Burky. Parents: Willard and Alta Miller Schrock. Children: Bruce, Doug, Lois Hochstetler; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 13 at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church.

Claassen, Gertrude, 95, Beatrice, Neb., died Sept. 2. Parents: Jacob Peter and Helen Goossen Claassen. Funeral: Sept. 5 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Clemens, Ella Mae Halteman, 97, Lansdale, Pa., died July 23. Spouse: H. Floyd A. Clemens (deceased). Children: Walter, Ada Allen, Floyd, Mary Martin, Arlene Clemens, Paul; 19 grandchildren. Funeral: July 29 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Hertzler, Margaret R. Gable, 84, Milton, Pa., died Aug. 16. Spouse: Jason R. Hertzler (deceased). Parents: Roy H. and Jennie A. Lehman Gable. Children: Glenn A., Gary L., Gerald E., Darlene L. Snader, Sharon E. Hummel; 13 grandchildren; four step-grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; one step-great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 22 at Community Mennonite Fellowship Church, Milton.

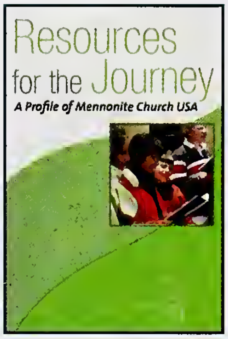
Kaufman, Dr. Dawn Erin Crocker, 63, Freeman, S.D., died Sept. 9 of cancer. Spouse: Dr. LeRoy Kaufman. Parents: Richard F., Jr., and Edith Lyon Crocker. Children: Erik, David. Funeral: Sept. 13 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Landis, Emma Buckwalter, 88, Lancaster, Pa., died Aug. 30. Parents: Henry Hess and Mary Rohrer Buckwalter Landis. Funeral: Sept. 4 at Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Lapp, Harriet Burkholder, 92, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 6. Spouse: J. Lawrence Burkholder. Parents: George and Esther Ebersole Lapp. Children: Howard, Myrna Burkholder, Janet Friesen; two grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 9 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Miller, Christina, 81, Sarasota, Fla., died Aug. 22. Parents: David and Fannie Ropp Miller. Funeral: Aug. 26 at Sunnyside Conservative Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

Herald Press: Windows into Our Denomination



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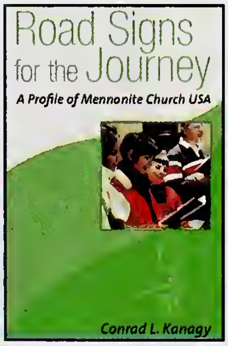

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Mininger, Joseph Henry, 83, Harman, W.V., died Aug. 30. Spouse: Eleanor V. Hangen Mininger. Parents: Henry G. and Sally Schlosser Mininger. Children: Steve, Les, Phil, Gary, John, Janine Kanagy, Tim, Betty Clifton; 20 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 2 at Harman.

Myers, Margaret Leatherman, 84, Pipersville, Pa., died Aug.23. Spouse: Clayton Myers. Parents: John and Mary Derstine Leatherman. Children: Wayne, Glen; four grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 25 at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie, Pa.

Noll, Irene Groff, 78, Manheim, Pa., died Aug. 30. Spouse: John B. Noll (deceased). Parents: Martin R. and Edna M. Martin Groff. Children: Susie Dourte, Linda Sauder; two grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 4 at East Petersburg Mennonite Church, East Petersburg, Pa.

Ruth, Lizzie Halteman, 80, Newville, Pa., died Aug. 29. Spouse: Rev. Marvin L. Ruth. Parents: Henry S. and Lizzie Bergy Halteman. Children: Dennis, Sharon Kuhns, Joan Ruth, Marilyn Ruth, Nancy Ruth; six grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 4 at Diller Mennonite Church, Newville.

Slagel, Vernelda C. Widmer, 84, Wayland, Iowa, died Sept. 2. Spouse: Warren Slagel. Parents: Dan G. and Viola Wyse Widmer. Children: Eric, Wendy Scarff, Kelly; five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 7 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Smith, Erika Gingerich, 48, Hartville, Ohio, died Sept. 5 after a lifelong struggle with juvenile diabetes. Parents: John E. and Grace Gingerich. Child: Patrick Allen. Funeral: Sept. 7 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Hartville.

Souder, Lester Ruth, 80, Telford, Pa., died Sept. 3 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Miriam W. Landes Souder. Parents: Preston and Emma Ruth Souder. Children: Eileen Landis, Melodia Alderfer, Hannah Hunter, Elizabeth Kolb, Rebecca Essick, Cheryl Rittenhouse, Clair; 18 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 8 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Souder, Paul F., 93, Sellersville, Pa., died Sept. 12. Spouse: Grace B. Detweiler Souder (deceased). Parents: Harvey A. and Bessie H. Freed Souder. Children: P. Don, Grace Marie Gerber, Feryl K., Earl C. Landis; eight grandchildren nine great-grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; three step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 15 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Watkins, Marcia Lynn Herschberger, 45, Kalona, Iowa, died Aug. 30. Spouse: Ron Hazen. Parents: Melvin and Veva Herschberger. Children: Katin Watkins, Tina Watkins, Jeremy Wiles. Funeral: Sept. 1 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Widmer, E. Urbane, 94, Canby, Ore., died Sept. 11. Spouse: Beulah Roth Widmer (deceased). Parents: Dan and Elfie M. Yoder Widmer. Children: Arlen "Woody," Darlene Kauffman, Charlotte Everts, LaVonne Widmer; nine grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grand-children. Funeral: Sept. 15 at Zion Mennonite Church, Clackamas, Ore.

Yoder, Martha V., 99, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 2. Parents: John S. and Sarah Hartzler Yoder. Funeral: Sept. 7 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen.

Zook, Merlin W., 70, Camp Hill, Pa., died Aug. 4. Spouse: Maxine Hartzler Zook. Parents: Ellrose D. and Frances Loucks Zook. Children: Kevin R., Kathleen J. Klassen; one grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 9 at Slate Hill Mennonite Church, Camp Hill.

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MCC urgent opening: ***resource generation network director***, Akron, Pa. Gives leadership to the resource generation network consisting of staff in MCC offices across Canada and the United States. Coordinates the establishment of standards in fund-raising, setting goals and building network capacities. Experience in nonprofit fund-raising with excellent skills in communication and management required. Candidates of a gender or ethnic group typically underrepresented in this type of MCC assignment are encouraged to apply. Contact Kathy Jackson at krj@mcc.org or call 717-859-1151 for job description and further information.

Eastern Mennonite University announces a ***full-time, one-year faculty position in Spanish*** for 2008-09 with possibility of renewal. Ph.D. preferred; M.A. and teaching experience required. Native speaker preferred; near-native fluency required. Teaching areas include conversation and readings, Spanish for health care, intermediate Spanish. Teaching load dependent upon candidate's expertise. Salary and rank determined by education and experience. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to Marie S. Morris, vice president and undergraduate academic dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802. http://www.emu.edu. Applicants will be acknowledged by letter. Review begins immediately. Applicants will be asked to respond to questions specific to EMU's mission after the initial inquiry. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity.

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Salem Mennonite Church, located near the growing community of Tofield, Alta. (45 minutes southeast of Edmonton), is seeking a ***lead pastor*** to minister to our congregation of 125 people. The successful candidate will have previous pastoral experience and/or a bachelor of theology degree or equivalent. Compensation will be commensurate with qualifications. Interested people should forward their resumés to: Carla Fendelet, secretary, Salem Mennonite Church, Box 56, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0; fax 780-662-0106; email cgfen@telus.net

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Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.20 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.

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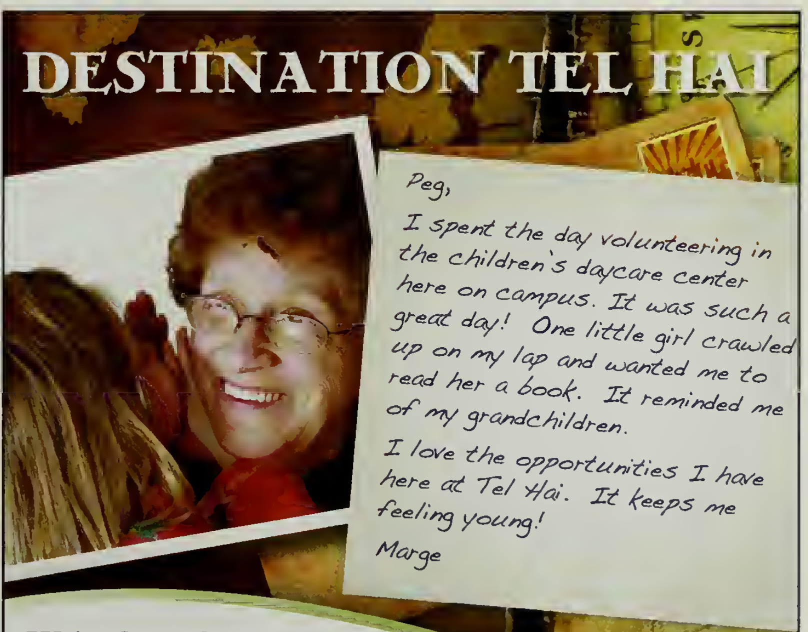

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Tell me your secret about marriage

Michael A. King is pastor of Spring Mount (Pa.) Mennonite Church, publisher of Cascadia Publishing House LLC and editor of *DreamSeeker* magazine.

Our African son (who took on this role when our families adopted each other due to our daughter's year of living with his) wrote, "Mr. and Mrs. King, may you tell me your secret about marriage." He asked this, he said, because he sees people marry, then soon divorce. We were saddened by this evidence that divorce is a cross-cultural tragedy, moved by his interest in our marriage and stirred to thought.

Many of our friends' marriages haven't made it. We've watched their rifts broaden until they're too wide for crossing. We've navigated such awkwardnesses as which ex may prefer to attend which party with which child.

Why are we still married? Not because we're perfect, say our children, who leave the room whenever one of the infamous Michael-Joan "negotiations" erupts. Not because it has been happily ever after; we have dug many a canyon of our own. We think longingly of the thousands we spent, early in marriage, on counseling. If we could have invested it instead those decades ago and reaped the miracle of compounding, then when we hit rough patches, our money-we-didn't-spend-on-counseling fund could send us to smooth things out there by crystalline rivers and blue lagoons.

> **We've been forced to learn, by trial and error and God's undeserved grace mixed in, some combination of the same principles most couples have to practice to stay married.**

What is our secret? Probably that we have no secret. We've only been forced to learn, by trial and error and God's undeserved grace mixed in, some combination of the same principles most couples have to practice to stay married amid the many pressures turning the odds of making it no better than 50-50.

What are those principles? We don't claim to know them all. Maybe there are 10, and each couple has to pick their essential handful. But for us, the older we get, they seem to boil down to three.

That would be negotiating money, sex and power, right? Once upon a time, yes. The first half of our marriage did seem to revolve around resolving that classic trio. Again and again we had to fight our way to fresh accommodations in these areas. But in the midst of matters so complex whole tomes on their implications for marriage have been written, simpler, gentler principles have emerged. These are our current three:

1. Sharing a sense of mission. When we first met, Joan still a teenager and I barely in my 20s, we were dreaming of doing something with our lives beyond the same-old same-old. Joan debated being a missionary to Russia. I investigated spending time in Poland with a Mennonite service agency. Neither dream came true. Yet often, these three decades later, we realize that one of the strongest ties that binds us remains that ongoing yearning to do something more with our lives. We've spent countless hours listening to the other's individual call of the soul as well as exploring what our souls are calling us to offer together.

2. Be nice to each other more often than mean. Recently we ran across John Gottman's "magic ratio," which is based on research into hundreds of marriages. It suggests that a marriage needs five positive interactions for every negative one. Fall below 5 to 1 and expect trouble.

I tested this as crassly as I could: I started phoning Joan and telling her I was just trying to get closer to 5 to 1. Even this method of implementing the ratio turns out to generate delightfully tender mutual energies.

3. The leaves. Yes, the leaves. Early in our relationship we'd lie on the floor under the library study tables at Eastern Mennonite University (Harrisonburg, Va.) and talk and talk. One day under "my" carrel in the middle of second floor, facing Lehman Auditorium, we got to talking about the leaves. It was autumn, and as often occurs on the EMU campus, the leaves were hauntingly lovely. We found out that both our spirits ached with longing in the presence of those leaves and that the sharing of the longing made the aching even sweeter.

The leaves have become our shorthand. They stand for everything in God's creation that makes our spirits not only ache for the beauty out there but also throb with the joy of jointly cherishing it—whether under cottonwoods in the desert Southwest, mango trees in Africa or the common old maples on our front lawn.

There you have it, dear son: Common mission. Nice more than mean. The leaves. TM

Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear by Scott Bader-Saye (Brazos Press, 2007, $17.99) draws insights about fear from medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas and stresses the importance of sharing our fears in ecclesial communities, where we can develop courage. It also notes that a reclamation of God's sovereignty will help us reframe our lives.

The Mystery of the Child by Martin E. Marty (Eerdmans, 2007, $24) presents the child as a mystery who invokes wonder and elicits creative responses that affect the care provided him or her. It encourages the thoughtful enjoyment of children instead of the imposition of adult will and control.

The Sacred Writings of Paul: Selections Annotated and Explained, translated and annotated by Ron Miller (SkyLight Paths, 2007, $16.99), guides readers through the complexities of Paul's writings using fresh translations from the original Greek and facing-page commentary.

Secrets of Prayer: A Multifaith Guide to Creating Personal Prayer in Your Life by Nancy Corcoran (SkyLight Paths, 2007, $16.99) provides tools to experiment with different types of prayer—prayer through motion, tactile prayer, prayer using silence and sound, story as prayer, prayer through the everyday.

Of Widows and Meals: Communal Meals in the Book of Acts by Reta Halteman Finger (Eerdmans, 2007, $28) examines Acts' agape-meal tradition, challenging traditional interpretations of the "community of goods" in the Jerusalem church and proving that communal sharing lasted hundreds of years longer than previously assumed.

Light in the Dark Ages: The Friendship of Francis and Clare of Assisi by Jon M. Sweeney (Paraclete Press, 2007, $16.95) explores how Francis was first found by God and then joined by Clare despite the violent objections of her family, then delves into a variety of issues they faced, including the treatment of lepers in medieval society, corruption in the 13th-century church and changing attitudes toward creation.

The Mennonite Handbook, edited by Sarah Kehrberg (Herald Press, 2007, $15.99), is an essential field guide for all things Mennonite. Combining reliable historical and theological information alongside some fun facts, it provides practical tips on being a churchgoing follower of Jesus Christ, including how to get to know your pastor, how to sing a four-part hymn, how to listen to a sermon, what to bring to a church potluck, how to survive a church split, how to console someone, how to memorize a Bible verse.

Tokens of Trust: An Introduction to Christian Belief by Rowan Williams (Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, $16.95) demonstrates that each of the basic tenets of the Christian faith flows from one fundamental belief: that God is completely worthy of our trust.

The Gospel According to Hollywood by Greg Garrett (Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, $16.95) looks at the theological elements in dozens of classic and recent Hollywood films, including a discussion of what the new openness to spirituality in the movies might mean for the future of American cinema and American religion.

Hearing a Film, Seeing a Sermon: Preaching and Popular Movies by Timothy B. Cargal (Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, $19.95) teaches pastors some of the basics of interpreting films so they can integrate insights about popular films into their preaching.

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Anna Groff

Taking time to settle

30's the new 20.—Jay-Z, best-selling rap artist

Many young adults, Mennonite and non-Mennonite, take their time "getting settled" with a career, home and church, even into their 30s. And during this time of navigating multiple life decisions, many young adults wish for grace and flexibility from church congregations.

Among young adults, there's the sense of "we've got time"—time to explore new locations, live with friends, travel abroad to serve or travel just to travel. The "life schedule" for graduate school, career and family becomes fuzzy and extended—and for many this is good and freeing.

As seen on pages 8-11, many young adults choose to move to a major city during this time.

I will live in a city for the first time in my life in November when I move to Pittsburgh. My new office location will be in the Union Project, a community building started by MennoCorps volunteers. I look forward to working around people who are committed to Pittsburgh.

When it comes to young adults, the pastors from urban churches (featured on pages 12-13) "get it." They seem to understand the predicaments and decisions young adults face and have adopted a patient, understanding attitude. They are OK with young adults who take their time figuring out how often they want to attend church services and at what capacity they want to join Sunday schools, small groups and other activities.

These pastors note that what works best for including young people in their congregations is encouraging their church to remain true to what it is and what it offers. Special programming and events geared to young adults often turn off the intended audience. Instead, churches that feel like family—where young people can interact with older people, children and youth—attract young adults, especially when they are in a new city and looking for a congregation to join.

I applaud their perceptiveness. Whether it's been through trial and error or genuine conversations with the young adults they know, they have realized that creating an intentional space for young adults can feel forced and fake. Instead, young people want to contribute their gifts to the church services and community as equal adults.

They also know that during the years 21 through 30—and beyond—church can provide a place for young people to seek out advice about careers, ask faith questions and learn from the other adults at the church who are in a variety of life stages.

Through talking with friends and listening to young adult peers at Mennonite conferences and conventions, I hear them voicing these concerns (and many more) in their relationship with church:

- balancing the tension between investing in Mennonite Church USA and personal yearnings for freedom and growth away from our home congregations;
- moving away from their rural Mennonite communities into larger cities with fewer Mennonites;
- being transient while also asking for a voice in Mennonite Church USA;
- feeling stuck between wanting to be asked to participate in church and wanting to take initiative;
- experiencing "tokenism" as a young adult from older adults;
- bringing emotional and spiritual baggage that influences how one relates to the church;
- searching for a place in an intergenerational community, with adults to look up to and youth to be role models for;
- struggling to connect to the language and music used in services;
- desiring to make the way from sitting in the back pew to contributing during sharing time or even leading worship—and in one's own time.

These concerns vary dramatically across the range of young adults who relate to Mennonite Church USA, and many of these statements may appear contradictory or indeterminate. Working through these issues requires grace, patience and love from church members and leaders. I found much encouragement through the thoughts and advice from the pastors of urban churches featured in this issue.—*ag*

Church can be a place for young people to seek advice about careers, ask faith questions and learn from other adults at the church in a variety of life stages.

Everett J. Thomas is on sabbatical until Nov. 1.

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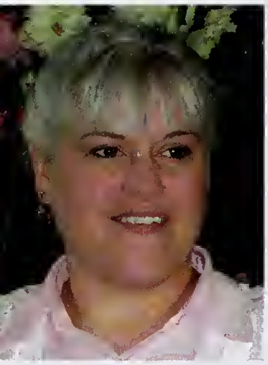
Reflections from a too-close encounter



Donna Mast is co-pastor of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Wham. The blow to my forehead was sharp and hard. I had forgotten to duck as I came to the pipe that runs along one part of our low-ceilinged basement. After the pain subsided, I thought nothing more of the incident. Nothing more, that is, until about a month later, when I sought relief for the tension in my shoulders and back.

"Donna, have you been in an accident?" the massage therapist asked me. "This seems more like an injury than tension." Then I remembered connecting with the pipe in our basement. Later, the chiropractor informed me that, yes, indeed, I could give myself whiplash by walking into a pipe.

As I began to heal under the chiropractor's care, I noticed that while I was experiencing relief in my back and shoulders, my neck muscles were more tender and sore. I told the chiropractor it was as if the surrounding muscles had become stiff and sore in sympathy with the injured muscles. Because the surrounding area hurt, I was even less likely to move the injured part of my body, giving it protection and time to heal. He said that is exactly what happens.

I wonder if something similar doesn't take place at times in our congregations—in the body of Christ. There is a misunderstanding, and someone gets hurt. Anger develops to cover the pain. Others notice, and in their caring, sympathetic anger grows in them. Still others may become hurt and angry until, before we know what has happened, we have a congregation in turmoil and a church split threatening. The congregation is unable to function as a healthy body. It can take months, even years, to unpack the pain and ease the tension.

With my neck, had I realized I had injured myself and sought help immediately, surrounding muscles would not have become so irritated, and likely I would have had a shorter recovery period. So it is in the body of Christ. If the original hurt can be addressed, anger does not need to become so entrenched. But too often in our churches, we think we are dealing with a minor disagreement and fail to seek help in a timely fashion. Those trained in conflict resolution often wish congregations would seek their help earlier. But too often, by the time a group realizes it could benefit from some professional assistance, the conflict has grown far beyond an easy solution.

> **Too often in our churches, we think we are dealing with a minor disagreement and fail to seek help in a timely fashion.**

Thankfully, God does bring healing to those congregations who desire to be healed. The body of Christ is, after all, God's precious own. Healing may take a long time, but it can and does come to those who truly seek health for the whole.

My neck is healing, too. As my range of motion increases and the pain decreases, I am thankful. I have been given exercises to do in hopes that I can regain full range of motion. The chiropractor says these exercises should simply become a daily, lifetime habit if I want to maintain the movement that has been achieved. Exercising good communication skills will go a long way in maintaining life and vitality in the body of Christ as well. TM

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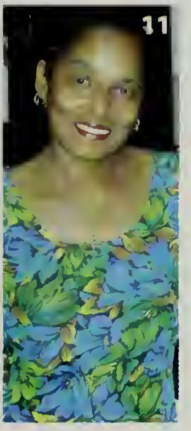

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

The parable of the weeds

I am surprised (to put it mildly) *The Mennonite* published "The Parable of the Weeds" (Aug. 21). This interpretation of the parable is what the state church leaders of Christendom have used to justify the concept of an invisible true church within the territorial mass church. Menno Simons and other Anabaptists vigorously opposed this faulty exegesis. Jesus said explicitly that the field is the "world" (not the church). The Anabaptists understood Jesus to be calling for a visible church in which binding and loosing takes place. For what Jesus said about church discipline we need to turn to Matthew 18 (not mentioned in the article).

This is not to say that church discipline has not been wrongly exercised at times. But using Jesus' parable of the weeds in support of a Christendom perspective does not fit with the excellent articles on the journey of Constantine and the opportunities for the church to be the church in this post-Christendom age.—*Ernest D. Martin, Columbiana, Ohio*

Dave Miller ("The Parable of the Weeds," Aug. 21) gives the often-heard argument that the parable (Matthew 13:24-30) means we are not to make judgments in the church. He doesn't mention what Jesus says the field in the story is. The field in which we are not to pull out the weeds is the world (v. 38), not the church. Christians should not go around trying to pull up all the "weeds" in the world; God alone will decide who will be thrown into the "fiery furnace."

When Jesus says, "Judge not" in Matthew 7, he is saying, Don't judge hypocritically or judgmentally. In Matthew 18, Jesus gives strong commands on how we are to judge or discern between good or bad behavior in the body of believers. In 1 Corinthians 5:12-13, Paul writes: "What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. Expel the wicked man from among you."

The Mennonite church has judged too harshly on trivial things in the past, and that was wrong. But that doesn't mean that today we should be a church where we just say, Oh well, whatever you want, who am I to judge. That is not true community.—*Gary Oyer, Hesston, Kan.*

Is lust the most gender-specific sin?

Steve Thomas' article ("The Deadly Sin of Lust") and Jesse R. Engle's letter (Sept. 18) add to the religiously and politically "correct" voices conforming to national TV, movies, cartoons, comics and greeting cards telling us each day that men are the main sinners (and dummies). Some ask why men say no to church. A "nonconformist" denomination should see some connection and question our culture's fashionable male bashing.

We need to reject sin, and my friends are nervous about challenging modern female chauvinism, but they may note that Jesus condemned the dominant male chauvinism of his day, and he is our model for speaking up against any disrespect. —*Ronald Rich, Bluffton, Ohio*

Beware government propaganda

The delegates at San José asked the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA "to formulate a process that helps us explore our identity as Mennonites living in what many consider to be the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth."

This will take uncommon courage from the Executive Board. It will need to resist the temptation to avoid controversy by creating a process without resources or visibility. And it will need to resist the impulse to conclude that reiterations of our traditional teaching about peace are adequate to loosen the hold that government propaganda has claimed in our lives.

For example, it has become a part of our identity as Americans that we were victimized on 9/11 by radical Islamic militants who hate our way of life. While the church often asks us to trust God for our protection, prophetic voices challenging the truth of the 9/11 myth are rare.

The process called for by our delegates must challenge our acceptance of official lies and distortions. Then the Spirit of God will be unfettered and, as the delegates requested, we will discover "resources that help us live faithfully in Christlike ways."—*Berry Friesen, Lancaster, Pa.*

Cancer's good and bad

As a two-time cancer (lymphatic lymphoma and follicular B cell lymphoma) survivor, I know the

IN THIS ISSUE

Even though he was on his three-month sabbatical, Editor Everett Thomas spent 10 days in August in what is called Katrina land (page 8). There he interviewed Mennonite Disaster Service workers and the people MDS has helped (pages 10-17) and took many photos. He also shot some video, which you may access on our Web site. These pages give us a look at what's happening two years after that devastating hurricane. You can also read my report of the Executive Board meeting (page 19) and Assistant Editor Anna Groff's story from her trip to Jordan last month (page 22). Gerald Mast, vice chair of the board of The Mennonite, Inc., writes the editorial (page 32).—*Acting editor* good and bad sides of this insidious disease.

Sleepless nights, loss of hair, nausea, pain, the inability to work, being deprived of routine family and social events, plus thoughts about the end of life are part of the bad side. But the good side provides a longer list: the abiding presence of the Lord, loving caregivers, loving church family, caring neighbors, dear friends, cancer support group, the prayers of these people and their kind spirit, all overshadow the bad side. My spirit agrees with Esther Bailey's statement, "Good things have happened to me as a direct result of cancer" (Aug. 7).

I also connect with Bonnie Heppner (Readers Say, Sept. 18). The stress on caregivers is often greater than it is on the victim.

I am humbled that I have survived the imminent death sentence pronounced to me by my medical doctor 35 years ago while so many family members and friends have succumbed to this dreadful disease within 35 weeks or 35 months. My journey has had many good things to celebrate and some bad things to cope with. I resonated with the prayer in *Rejoice!* devotional guide on Sept. 26: "Help me, Lord, to hold joy and lament together in my heart."—*John Otto, Newton, Kan.*

Finding Christ in Harry Potter

Thanks for Ryan Ahlgrim's article "Finding Christ in Harry Potter" (Sept. 18). At heart, the books express the core gospel theme that sacrificial love is more powerful than anything else in existence—even death. And the main setting, Hogwarts School, is a place where all (even Slytherins) are welcome and where the rejected can find a home.

Not only should Christians not be afraid of these books; we're all likely to have our faith deepened by reading and discussing them.—*John Zimmerman, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa*

Thanks to Ryan Ahlgrim for his insightful comments (and those of his discussion group) on the Harry Potter books. I have been an admirer of the nonviolent manner of conflict transformation in these books ever since we bought the first one, years ago, for our children.

In this area I have found Harry Potter much closer to the spirit of Christ than the characters in C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* (to say nothing of his space trilogy). Narnia's characters must habitually engage in warfare and killing to overcome evil, which I have always found distressing.

I've been maintaining over the years that J.K. Rowling could still disappoint me on that account. She has come near that in this last book. I wish it had been possible to defeat Lord Voldemort without killing Tom Riddle. In the end, this is the only character without nuance—totally evil, and his death thus becomes "necessary." Not quite the same as Paul's insistence that our warfare is not against flesh and blood. But this is probably mere quibbling. I still maintain the model of conflict transformation in these books is far more Christian than what can be found in C.S. Lewis' fiction.—*Dennis Byler, Burgos, Spain*

Young urban Mennonites

Thanks for the articles on "urban migration" (Oct. 2). Generally I, my housemates and other young Mennonites flip through the magazine looking for names we know, then hand it off to the next person before recycling it. But this one excited us, particularly because of how many former Mennonite Voluntary Service workers choose to stay in Seattle and of our relationship to the church. As citified young Mennonites, we talk about this issue a lot, particularly about the church-hunting challenges.

It is an issue the Mennonite churches in Seattle are dealing with in different ways, so it's helpful to read what the pastors said. It's also nice to have an article that applies specifically to us. And the cover is attractive: It's what I'm coming to associate more with my definition of Mennonite than a farm in Ohio or Kansas.—*Meryl Roth, Seattle.*

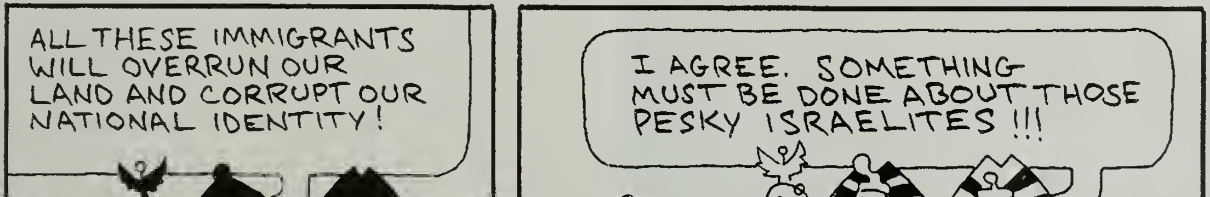
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

If my house were destroyed in a natural disaster, I would rebuild in the same location (47 votes):

- ○ Yes (38%)
- ○ No (19%)
- ○ Depends (34%)
- ○ Not sure (9%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


ALL THESE IMMIGRANTS WILL OVERRUN OUR LAND AND CORRUPT OUR NATIONAL IDENTITY!
I AGREE. SOMETHING MUST BE DONE ABOUT THOSE PESKY ISRAELITES !!!

IN BRIEF

Buddhism in Burma

Buddhist teachings and values are deeply ingrained in Burmese society, and when monks lead, an unwritten message is sent to the nation. The arrest of monks creates a shocking dissonance in the minds of the Buddhist population. In the practice of Buddhism in Burma, people frequently leave the routine of their lives for a few weeks to become monks ... perhaps in the hope of gaining merit, more spiritually centered living or to move along in their own personal cycle of karma. Some of the monks walking in the demonstrations now are almost certainly people who have only recently joined the monastery for a brief break. The flow of popular participation in monastic life is an opportunity for military intelligence agencies to infiltrate in times like this. According to reports from Thailand, the Burmese military has ordered monks clothing from a factory. At least one role of military intelligence people will be to collect information about plans. An even more dangerous role, familiar to peacemakers around the world, is the placement of agent provocateurs who turn peaceful demonstrations into violent confrontations that are then blamed on Buddhists, who by implication have deserted their nonviolent disciplines.—*Gene Stoltzfus*

Vietnam recognizes Mennonite church

HO CHI MINH CITY—Vietnam's national Religious Affairs Committee presented a "Certificate for Religious Activities" to the Vietnam Mennonite Church Oct. 2 in a ceremony to mark the occasion. The ceremony was held at a restaurant in Binh Thanh District, Ho Chi Minh City. The document recognizes the church's purpose to "worship the triune God and love all people according to the Word of the Lord in the Holy Bible, live the gospel, serve God, serve the country and the people."—*Mennonite World Conference*

Money for Congo to provide computer center

ELKHART, Ind.—The junior high youth at San José 2007 raised $5,005.88 to support ministries in Congo. Church leaders and young adults in Congo hope to use the funds to build a computer center. This center, which will offer a cyber café and computer support, will be based in Kinshasa and may have branches in other urban centers, such as Kikwit, Tshikapa, Mbuji-Mayi and Kananga. This contribution is part of a relationship between Mennonite Church USA and two Mennonite denominations in Congo.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Jon Unger Brandt

Missions Conference held in Germany

Brother Yun, a Chinese house church leader, ministers to international mission leaders at the International Missions Association meetings Sept. 5-7 in Bechterdissen, Germany. Also, the fifth annual Holy Spirit in Missions Conference was hosted by the Mennonitengemeinde Bechterdissen of north Germany Aug. 30-Sept. 2. —*Eastern Mennonite Missions*

Havot Ma'on settlers attack CPT workers

AT-TUWANI, West Bank—Settlers from the Havot Ma'on outpost attacked CPT workers accompanying shepherds in Khoruba valley near Tuwani village on Sept. 28.

Four CPT workers were accompanying two young shepherds and their sheep on a hill between Khoruba and Mshekhla valleys. Fifteen settlers emerged from the trees of Havot Ma'on outpost. Three young settlers shouted and cursed as they chased the workers, shepherds and sheep down into Khoruba valley. The three settlers began throwing stones once they approached two of the CPT workers. One settler attempted to grab a CPT video camera, while another threatened, "You come back here and we kill you."

The settlers wrapped their robes around their faces and continued to throw stones. A settler successfully seized the video camera from one CPT worker and retreated. The CPT workers demanded the return of the camera. One settler responded, "You go now and you go with your life."

After leaving, the CPT workers notified the police and continued to accompany shepherds on Khoruba Hill. An army jeep and police car arrived 40 minutes later. One CPT worker traveled with the police to Kiryat Arba police station to file testimony for a formal complaint. The investigation is pending, though police admitted that it is difficult to investigate during the Sukkot holidays.—*CPT*

Local alumni group raises money for games

LANCASTER, Pa.—A group of Lancaster-area alumni from Goshen (Ind.) College and Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Va., organized the colleges' soccer games held on Sept. 15 at Lancaster Mennonite High School as a celebration of Mennonite higher education.

The group invited the men's and women's teams from the colleges to participate and raised $12,000 from local supporters to make it possible.

Daryl Groff, lead organizer of the event, says the game was about "increasing the exposure for and highlighting the quality of our Mennonite institutions in the eastern Pennsylvania area. Our hope is that other communities in the Mennonite church will adopt this model and invite athletic teams from our educational institutions into their communities as a way of supporting our colleges."

The athletic departments from both schools are

Wayne Gehman

Swartz of Ted & Lee performs with an assembled cast
In the Ted & Lee play "Fish-Eyes," Andrew (Jason Hildebrand, left) and Peter (Ted Swartz) depict the Last Supper. A live videotaping of "Fish-Eyes" and "Creation Chronicles" took place at the Eastern Mennonite School, Harrisonburg, Va., auditorium on Sept. 18, 20 and 21. Ted Swartz assembled a cast of seasoned actors to play roles he had created with Lee Eshleman during their 20-year partnership as Ted & Lee TheaterWorks. Eshleman died in May. The programs were videotaped for a 32-week video curriculum being prepared by Abingdon Press (United Methodist). Each week of the curriculum will cover a Scripture segment that will be illustrated by one of the Ted & Lee-created scenes (plus new scenes to be written by Ted and taped in November). Ted will continue to create and perform new dramas with other actors. See www.tedandlee.com for more information.—*Sheri Hartzler*

committed to holding athletic contests in Mennonite communities when invited, says David King, athletic director of EMU.

"After the invitation from the Lancaster group, Ken Pletcher of Goshen College and I put together a template or model for holding these events in Mennonite communities," says King.

Current plans include baseball games for Goshen, EMU and Bluffton (Ohio) University in Sarasota, Fla., in March, and women's volleyball matches with the three schools in Bluffton in the fall of 2008.—*Anna Groff*

Art exhibit in New York depicts Lancaster life

NEW YORK—Jayne Holsinger's latest art exhibit, "A Visual Offering," features oil-on-panel paintings that depict Mennonite life in Lancaster, Pa.

The series is a product of Holsinger's MFA thesis, in which she aims to unite her Anabaptist upbringing and academic study. Holsinger attends Manhattan (N.Y.) Mennonite Fellowship. The art was on exhibit at Margaret Thatcher Projects in New York City until Oct. 6. The exhibit will travel to Goshen (Ind.) College in December.—*Sara Versluis*

'Another Way' celebrates 20 years

HARRISONBURG, Va.— Melodie Davis' "Another Way" column celebrates its 20th anniversary. The column appears in 12 media outlets across the United States and also online at Third Way Café.

Melodie Davis

Davis says she approaches her writing as an outlet for an Anabaptist, third-way voice in religious and secular media as well as for her own thoughts.

Davis writes the column for Mennonite Media, a division of Mennonite Mission Network.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Visas denied for two conference speakers

NEWTON, Kan.—Visas were denied for two of the speakers for a gathering of women of color titled "Encountering the Face of God" and hosted at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., Oct. 5-7.

The two women were Ofelia Garcia of Mexico City and Sidonie Swana Falanga of Kinshasa, Congo. Falanga works with women theologians in Democratic Republic of Congo, and Garcia has worked alongside Alix Lozano of Colombia to explore Anabaptist theology with Latinas.

The conference—organized by Mennonite Church USA, Mennonite Central Committee U.S., Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Mennonite Women USA—provided a space for Mennonite racial/ethnic women to gather and explore Anabaptist theology.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership has been writing letters of protest to the State Department expressing concern over the situation.—*Mennonite Church USA*

Letter sent to Bush about border wall

NEWTON, Kan.—Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, and Sharon Waltner, moderator, wrote a letter to President Bush to express the denomination's concern about the negative impacts of the proposed 700-mile wall on the four United States border states. The letter states: "We suggest that a better application for national security would be to assist the Mexican economy so people can find jobs in their home towns in Mexico with sufficient income to support their families. Savings from not building an ineffective wall should be used to reform our immigration system, whose backlogs and prolonged legalities make lawful entry into the United States very difficult."—*Mennonite Church USA*

—*compiled by Anna Groff*

IN BRIEF

Hesston raises $715 to fight breast cancer

A breast cancer fundraiser collected $715 to honor a family of a Hesston (Kan.) College volleyball player during a volleyball invitational Sept. 21-22. The idea originated with sophomore twins Jocelyn and Jessica Forshee, Concordia, Kan., whose mother, Debra, was diagnosed with breast cancer. Jocelyn plays on the volleyball team.—*Hesston College*

Give the earth a break

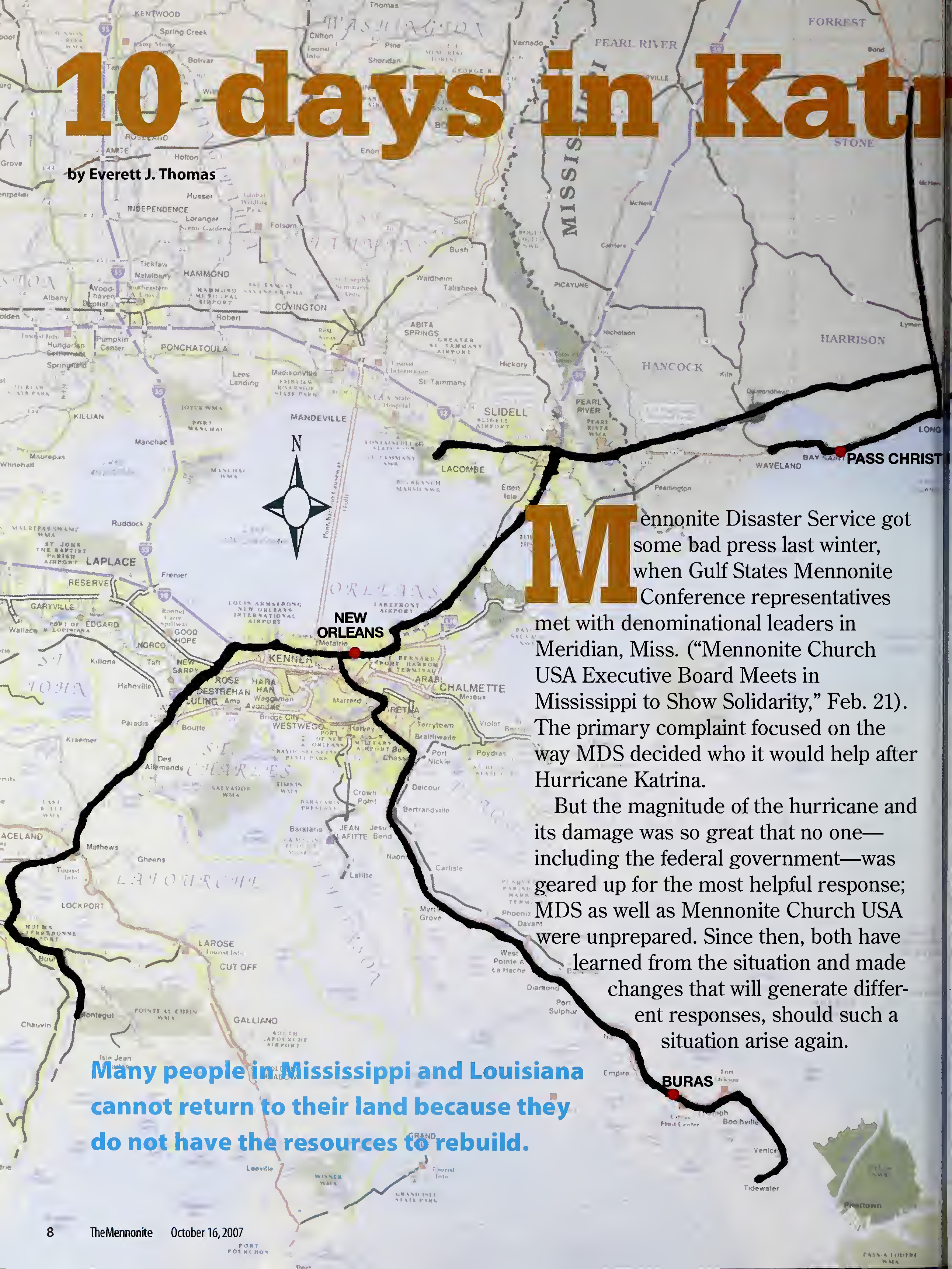
Religious groups concerned about the environment need to take the Sabbath seriously, argues Christopher D. Ringwald, author of *A Day Apart: How Jews, Christians, and Muslims Find Faith, Freedom, and Joy on the Sabbath.* Acknowledging that hospital and police department personnel have to keep working on Sunday, he calls on the rest of us to avoid using combustion engines on the Sabbath. Taking the Sabbath seriously could reduce our energy consumption by 14 percent.—*The Christian Century*

People's war?

More than 180,000 civilians are working in Iraq under U.S. contracts, compared with 160,000 soldiers and a few thousand civilian government employees stationed there, according to the *Los Angeles Times.*—*Sojourners*

10 days in Kat

by Everett J. Thomas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NEW ORLEANS
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PEARL RIVER
LOCKPORT
LAROSE
GALLIANO

Mennonite Disaster Service got some bad press last winter, when Gulf States Mennonite Conference representatives met with denominational leaders in Meridian, Miss. ("Mennonite Church USA Executive Board Meets in Mississippi to Show Solidarity," Feb. 21). The primary complaint focused on the way MDS decided who it would help after Hurricane Katrina.

But the magnitude of the hurricane and its damage was so great that no one—including the federal government—was geared up for the most helpful response; MDS as well as Mennonite Church USA were unprepared. Since then, both have learned from the situation and made changes that will generate different responses, should such a situation arise again.

Many people in Mississippi and Louisiana cannot return to their land because they do not have the resources to rebuild.

JACK
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ina land

Lessons about Mennonite Disaster Service work in the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina in 2005

After the hurricane, church members called denominational offices in Elkhart, Ind., or Newton, Kan., asking where they could send money to help other Mennonites rebuild. These callers were told to send their contributions to Mennonite Disaster Service. But MDS policies in 2005 stipulated that they help only the poorest of the poor, and most Mennonite sisters and brothers in "Katrina land" did not fit that category. Consequently, Mennonite Church USA has set up a system for receiving funds that will then be directed toward helping other Mennonites.

After I reported the negativity that emerged during last January's Executive Board meeting, MDS leaders approached me about their side of the story. Specifically, they asked me to take 10 days during my three-month sabbatical and visit their units in some of the area devastated by Hurricane Katrina. This was the deal: MDS would pay for my trip, and I could report on whatever I found. A copy of our memo of understanding is posted on our Web site: www.themennonite.org.

After spending Aug. 20-30 in Katrina land with complete access to the work MDS is doing there, I discovered that this unprecedented natural disaster has significantly changed the organization (see page 14).

Ten days and 978 miles in Mississippi and Louisiana (see map at left) also left me with two questions about MDS in Katrina land:

1. Why rebuild?

People who lost their homes know that many of us in the North wonder about rebuilding communities that sit below sea level. But their answer is simple: This is our home. Several people compared their situations to the May 4 tornado that devastated Greensburg, Kan.

"It's like anybody's town that was hit by a tornado," said Catrina Schrock, project director for the MDS unit in Pass Christian, Miss.

Schrock pointed out that people who live in tornado-prone areas in the Midwest do not move away after a tornado strikes their homes. Instead they rebuild on the same places where their families may have lived for generations.

But many people in Mississippi and Louisiana cannot return to their land because they do not have the resources to rebuild. For example, 93 percent of former residents in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward still have not returned after two years. That's because there is little there but the foundations on which their houses had been sitting; their homes were washed away when a nearby levee broke. But MDS will build a house for a pastor and his family on the same spot where they lived before (see photo on page 16).

Another response to the doubts about rebuilding is that New Orleans and many other areas are already rebuilt. New roads and bridges are everywhere. Many commercial and industrial buildings damaged by the storm or the flooding have been repaired. Shiny new roofs stand out less and less as the old gives way to new.

2. What is the relationship between MDS volunteers who clean up or rebuild homes and sharing our faith?

I posed this question to several people. One was the president of the Pass Christian, Miss., Rotary Club. (MDS provides volunteer labor, and the local Rotary Club pays for the material. So far this collaboration has resulted in 11 new homes for low-income residents.)

On Aug. 22, medical doctor D.H. Short helped dedicate the latest house. I asked Short, who is not Mennonite, what he thought of MDS and its volunteers.

"I am absolutely enamored of them," Short said. "They all have one desire: to help other people."

But Short was glad that MDS volunteers do not "push their faith" onto the people they help.

"In our situation down here, it would be detrimental [to be evangelistic]," Short said. "Clients might feel like, We have to listen to them because they built us a house."

Denis Janz, professor at Loyola University and coordinator for the MDS unit in New Orleans, said that MDS project managers explain who Mennonites are when clients ask about them.

"People who are helped ought to know who we are," said Janz. "But on the other hand, I would hate for us to be too pushy [and say], We're doing this work so you should buy in (to our faith)."

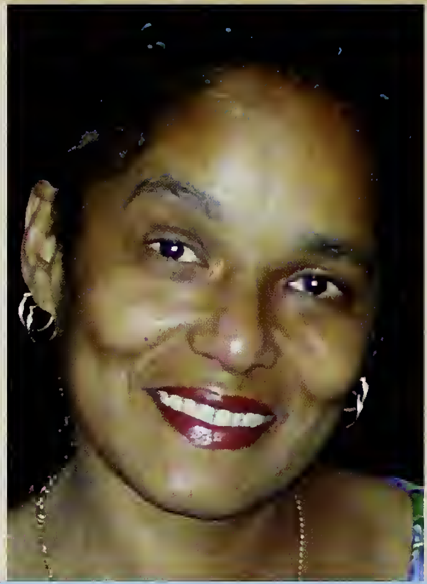
Mike Wilson, project director for the unit located in Diamond, La., witnesses to his Creole neighbors by staying through the heat of the summer. Even though there were no volunteers in his unit during August to work in the nearby villages and bayous, Wilson got up at 5:30 a.m. to visit with the men—mostly shrimpers and tug boat captains—who gather at the local coffee shop every morning.

"I can't think of any other place I want to be," said Wilson, as he motored MDS' 14-foot flat bottom boat to one of the MDS projects on the Grand Bayou. "This is what I understand God calls us to do."

Everett J. Thomas is editor of The Mennonite.

Stories of hope and faith

The people M



Carmen Dedeaux: 'The house that love built'

Carmen evacuated her home in Pass Christian, Miss., on Aug. 28, 2005, as the eye of Hurricane Katrina approached the Mississippi coast. The 30-foot storm surge removed her house from its foundation, then deposited it on its side several blocks inland among the debris of other buildings, vehicles and shattered trees.

For a week after the storm, Pass Christian residents were not allowed back into what was left of their town. When Dedeaux finally made it to her house through the debris, she could stay only long enough to find a few personal items. Several weeks later when she was allowed to return again, she found that her house had been bulldozed, and nothing was left.

The double devastation left her bitter at God.

"I lost my faith in God," says Dedeaux, who was so angry that she sat

Lloyd Boisseau: no longer jaded

"Oh, Lord. Thank you so much!" said Catalina Boisseau when John Kroeker, project director for Mennonite Disaster Service New Orleans, told her that MDS would commit to rebuilding her shattered home. "It's been two years and my husband is so depressed. He is disabled and can't get out of bed."

Catalina insisted that Kroeker come into their FEMA trailer and tell her husband the good news personally. Lloyd Boisseau explained why he was "jaded" about promises of help.

"People come and say they will help us," Lloyd says. "They get their picture and name in the paper and never come back."

The Boisseau house is one of four new houses MDS will help build in the New Orleans area this fall and winter. Money for building supplies will come from partners such as Catholic Charities; the labor will be provided by MDS volunteers.

Tony and Donna Duplessis: 'a shoulder to cry on'

Tony Duplessis, pastor of Lighthouse Fellowship Church near Buras, La.,says: "[Mennonite Disaster Service] has been a nucleus that [allowed] our congregation to come back. I had a shoulder to cry on, and they had a plan. We wouldn't be able to be back without MDS."

Hurricane Katrina obliterated their home, built on property that has been in Donna's Native American family for generations. When they returned after the storm, only the cement steps from the front porch remained.

The Duplessis family, currently living 30 miles away as their home is being rebuilt, are philosophic about living on the long, low peninsula that extends southeast from New Orleans into the Gulf of Mexico.

The watery bayou country is especially vulnerable to hurricanes. Hurricane Katrina passed through Buras before going across the Gulf and making landfall at Pass Christian, Miss. (see map on page 16).

DS helps

by Everett J. Thomas

See video at www.themennonite.org.

down in the middle of what had been her street and screamed at God. God responded by sending Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers to rebuild her house.

"People would come in, put down stakes and work until they were finished," she says. "It got to where they were no longer helping build my house. God was sending people to help me rebuild my faith."

Today she enjoys the house on pylons that also represents her rebuilt faith.

"I have more faith now," Dedeaux says, "not because I got a new house. [The volunteers] came in with the same agenda: that God loves you. That's what is so special about this house, the house that love built."

Note: Carmen tells her story firsthand at www.themennonite.org.

Rebuilt faith: Carmen Dedeaux in the kitchen of her new house in Pass Christian, Miss. The Pass Christian Rotary Club provided building material and MDS provided the volunteer labor.

No longer jaded

"I'm jaded," a disabled Lloyd Boisseau tells MDS' project director John Kroeker. "People say they will come and help us, get their picture and name in the paper and never come back."

A storm the size of Katrina "happens once in 37 years," Tony says. "A once-in-37-year average is good."

Tony and his family evacuated to Arkansas during the storm. Tony says that during their stay there they experienced an earthquake and a ornado. Tony compared the various natural disasters that afflict different egions of the country and still feels safer with a hurricane.

"We know a hurricane is coming a week in advance," he says.

A CHRISTIAN CHURCH
HOUSE FELLOWSHIP
10am SUNDAY WORSHIP
11:15am SUNDAY SCHOOL
7P.M. WED. BIBLE STUDY
GULF STATES MENNONITE CONFERENCE

Philosophic about living in hurricane country: Tony and Donna Duplessis and heir granddaughter Kennedy stand in front of the Lighthouse Fellowship Church, Gulf States Mennonite Conference congregation where Tony currently serves as nterim pastor.

Taking care of the poor on earth

Lonoise Dodo (left) stands on the deck of the house built on pylons by Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers in Point Au Chenes, La. The elevator is for her disabled husband. Dodo says 10-15 volunteers built her house, and some still stay in touch with her. "One of them called me two nights ago," she says. "[MDS volunteers] take care of the poor on earth."

Right: Volunteers for the Pass Christian, Miss., MDS unit buil a deck onto a new house constucted on pylons. The house is about six blocks from the Gulf of Mexico.

A quilt, a Bible and a house

Ken Sutter (right), Mennonite Disaster Service worker from Clarksville, Mich., presents a Bible to Bernard and Earlene Ulrich, who also received a handmade quilt and the key to their new house in Pass Christian, Miss., during a ceremony at the local community center on Aug. 22. Building materials for their home were purchased by the Pass Christian Rotary Club, and MDS provided the labor. The Ulrich home was the 11th home built in Pass Christian through the collaboration of MDS with the Rotary Club during the past two years.

100 and counting

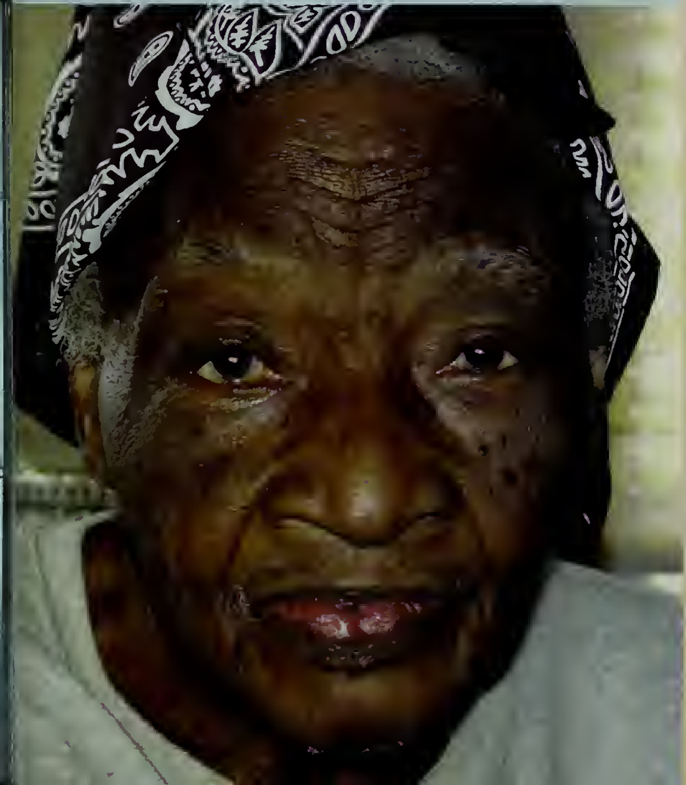
Rose Cosy (right) turned 100 on Oct. 13. She hoped her Katrina-ravaged house would be finished by Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers in time for her birthday party. Bu when John Kroeker, MDS project manager, checked on her house (left) and visited Cosy in her FEMA trailer on Aug. 23, she was waiting patiently. "I'm waiting on the Lord," said Cosy. "You don't rush people when they are doing all they can to make you comfortable."

Mennonite Disaster Service's unit in New Orleans, closed during the month of September; reopened on Oct. 1.

What does MDS stand for?

Mike Wilson, project director for the MDS unit near Buras, La., has several different explanations for the acronym formed by Mennonite Disaster Service's name:

- Must Do Something
- Mudding, Drywalling, Sanding
- Make Do Somehow
- Mastering the Demanding Seas
- Mennonite Dating Service



Photos on pages 10-17 are by Everett J. Thomas, except the photo below.

Gilead

(for the victims of Hurricane Katrina)

by Willie James King

It is good to think there's balm to be had
in Gilead, but I long for some here

this morning, in Montgomery. I wait
in the hail-shaft of a storm that rages

as if the ice of heaven is falling
trying to tear right through the roof. A friend

phones to ask if I'm okay, to ask if
I'll come to work today. I answer him

Yes! and Yes! tell him, I will arrive when
all the bad weather passes. I know

the present effects are here to stay.
Yet happy is the heart that can let go—

My nerves feel like tossed tin that will always
bear crude holes to show where the nails have been.

Willie James King lives in Montgomery, Ala.

Dee Birkey

How Katrina is changing MDS

Mennonite Disaster Service learns about urban

by Everett J. Thomas

Just as the U.S. government changed its emergency response policies after Hurricane Katrina, Mennonite Disaster Service is adapting to its situation in the New Orleans area. These changes have MDS sailing into uncharted waters.

MDS usually moves into an area suffering from a natural disaster and stays a short time. In three locations in "Katrina land" (see pages 16-17) however, MDS has invested heavily in buildings and staff, which signals a resolve to stay for several years.

Long-term volunteers and staff: Although the MDS business model relies on volunteers who serve a month or longer, the New Orleans situation will mean a shift. That is because the unique urban challenges in that culture require people who can build long-term relationships with public officials and establish credibility with the charitable agencies with whom MDS works.

Denis Janz, professor at Loyola University, has lived in the New Orleans area more than 30 years. He helped MDS set up its unit there and describes the challenges he faced during the first months after the hurricane.

"A lot depends on how you talk to people and who you know," Janz says. "I called every friend, contractor, electrician I knew … people who knew the system. These things work differently in a big city than in rural areas and small towns."

In order to work in this urban environment, MDS plans to place a long-term, volunteer coordinator for its work in the New Orleans area.

"We realize that our model of project directors—two months in and out—needed more support," says Kevin King, MDS executive director. In addition, "our typical volunteers are not urbanites. It's a shift for them to work [in New Orleans]. Their concern often is, 'Is it safe?' Of course it's safe."

For volunteers in New Orleans, the recently completed MDS facility on Hayne Boulevard provides a comfortable place to relax.

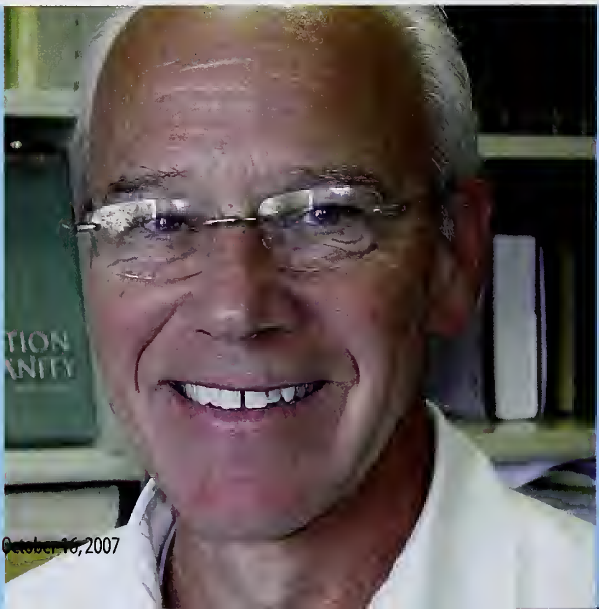
Investing in buildings: The three-story unit, located across the street from a levee holding back Lake Ponchartrain, was an office building before Katrina removed its roof. MDS purchased the water-damaged building, and volunteers remodeled it into accommodations for up to 40 short-term volunteers.

"It's unusual for us to buy buildings," says King. "But in New Orleans we're in for the long-haul. We're committed to being there three to five years … as long as we have meaningful work and the financial resources necessary."

The Mennonite love train: When MDS leaves an area, local clients can feel abandoned. So MDS looks to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) to provide follow-up in ways that are not part of MDS' mission or expertise.

"MDS might leave, but the local people know the Mennonites are still there," says King. "It is the Mennonite love train."

While such collaboration is not new for MDS, Hurricane Katrina pushed the organization into new relationships with leaders at MCC, MEDA and Mennonite Church USA.



A lot depends on how you talk to people and who you know. … These things work differently in a big city than in rural areas and small towns.
—Denis Janz

ife, relationships

"Before [Katrina]," says King, "we hardly knew each other's names. Now we have each other's cell phone numbers."

Relationships with other Mennonite agencies are not the only ones changed for MDS. The MDS board has developed new guidelines for responding to Mennonites whose homes and church buildings have been affected by a natural disaster.

"You might have a Mennonite church with a window blown out, and two miles away a [low-income, non-Mennonite] family lost its house," says King. While MDS may choose to build the family a house rather than replace the church's window, he says, MDS has learned that the congregation is also a victim and experiences loss.

"We've had to look at ways we relate to Anabaptist congregations," King says. "The faith community is the largest first-responder in the world, but it's the least prepared [when hit directly by a natural catastrophe]."

Changes at MDS have not gone unnoticed by leaders in Gulf States Mennonite Conference. Moderator Duane Maust refers to "the new MDS."

Former moderator Bob Zehr, who was a persistent and vocal critic of MDS policies and procedures last winter, now is much more supportive.

"I commend the administrative staff of MDS who were willing to adjust guidelines to meet needs," Zehr says. "Katrina is worthwhile if we manage to grow and change in positive ways through this experience."

Everett J. Thomas is editor of The Mennonite.

Some facts about MDS:

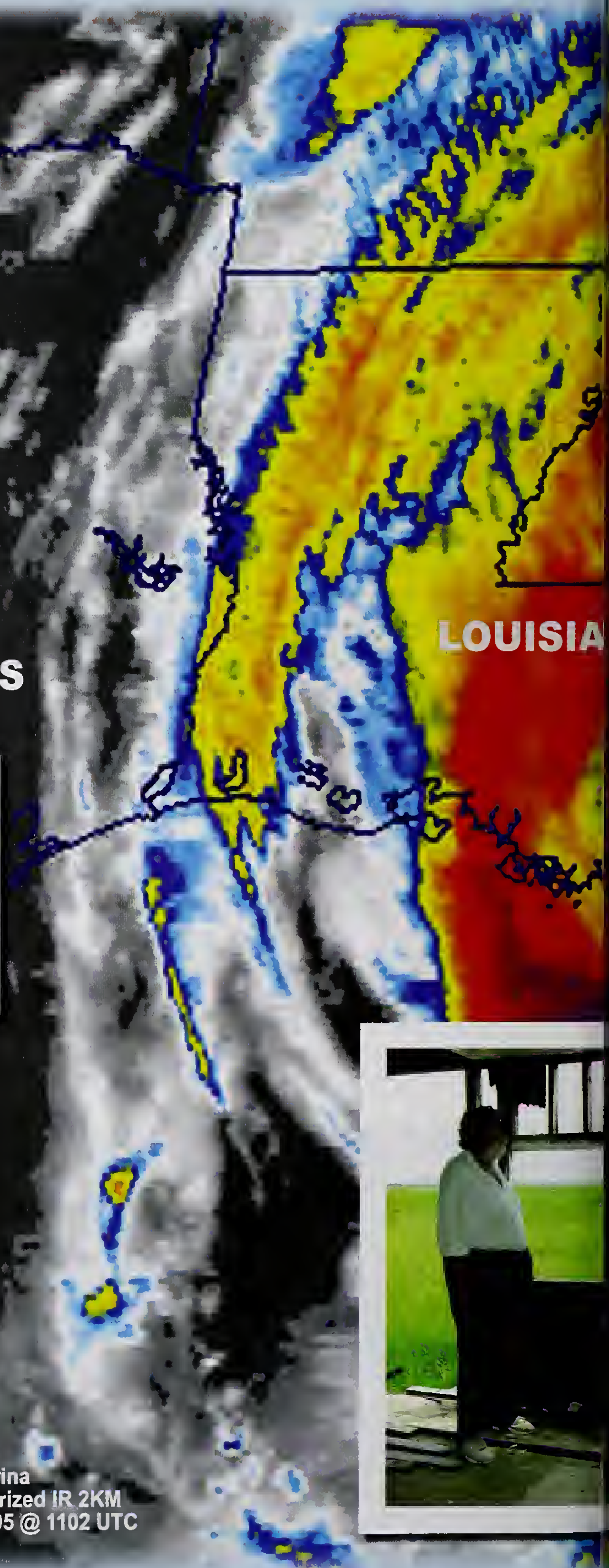
- **Founded in Kansas in 1950 as the Mennonite Service Organization**
- **In 1993 incorporated as an entity separate from Mennonite Central Committee**
- **Number of volunteers who worked for MDS in 2006: 6,103 (a record)**
- **Number of paid staff members in 2006 in United States and Canada: 15**
- **Number of work sites in 2006: Nine binational sites (does not include regional and unit projects that do not need oversight from the binational organization)**
- **Total expenses for fiscal year ending Nov. 30, 2006: $3,899,178**
- **Total revenue, gains and other support as of Nov. 30, 2006: $4,325,966**

Source: Mennonite Disaster Service

MDS might leave,
but the local people know
the Mennonites
are still there. It's the
Mennonite love train.
—Kevin King

Three Mennonite Disaste

New Orleans
John Kroeker, project director for Mennonite Disaster Service's New Orleans unit, plants a sign in the Lower Ninth Ward on the site where MDS will build a new house for the family that owns the land. According to the *Times Picayune*, New Orleans' major newspaper, 93 percent of the residents who lived in the Lower Ninth before Hurricane Katrina have not returned. The houses were destroyed when a levee broke.



Hurricane Katrina
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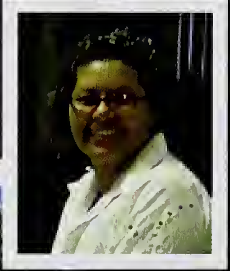
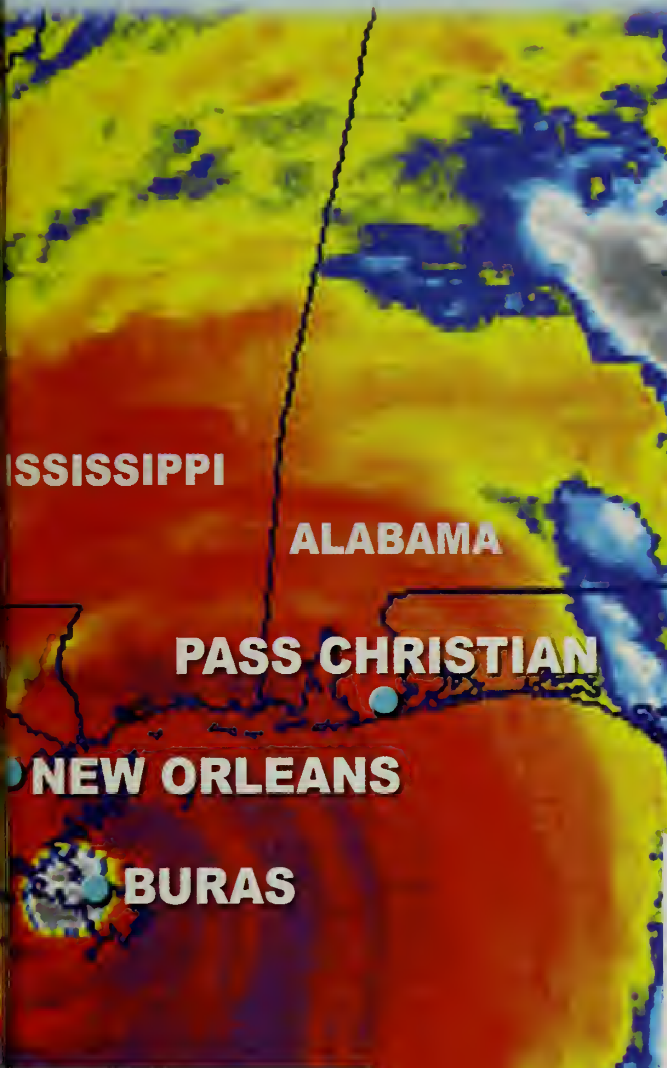
August 29, 2005 @ 1102 UTC

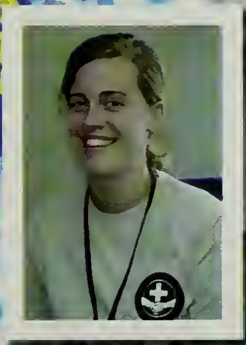


Buras, Louisiana
Mike Wilson, project director for the Buras, La., MDS unit, stands outside the house being built for Tony and Donna (inset) Duplessis. Right: Wilson examines a possible house "rebuild" on the Grand Bayou.

Service unit locations


ISSISSIPPI
ALABAMA
PASS CHRISTIAN
NEW ORLEANS
BURAS

Pass Christian, Mississippi
Above: MDS volunteers (left to right) Jonathan Horning, Brandon Leaman and Ken Sutter. Left (inset): Catrina Schrock, serves as project director for the Pass Christian, La., unit. Below: Ulrich house dedication on Aug. 22.



Mennonite Disaster Service
NAPERVILLE RESPONDS
PASS CHRI

See video at www.themennonite.org.

Getting started in leadership

Marlene Kropf is minister of worship, congregational and ministerial leadership for Mennonite Church USA.

I was a fortunate young adult. When our pastor saw leadership potential in me, he invited me to coteach an adult Sunday school class with him. I was a high school teacher with experience in designing curriculum and creating lesson plans but without formal theological training. As a seminary graduate, he had studied Scripture and theology. Together, we made an effective team.

Later we worked together in a variety of congregational and area conference settings leading spiritual formation retreats. Eventually Marcus Smucker and I became faculty colleagues at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., where we continued to coteach courses and guide the spiritual formation program of the seminary until his retirement several years ago.

The gift of collaboration. I owe a great debt to Marcus for my early formation as a congregational leader. Rather than just giving me a task and turning me loose, he took the time to collaborate with me. That meant we met to do our planning and then met again to evaluate what we had done. We discovered which parts of the teaching ministry were my strengths, and he freely handed over responsibility to me. At the same time, I valued what I was learning from him, especially his skills with group dynamics.

An important question. Marcus did something else that was critically important. Occasionally in our planning sessions, he'd pause, push back his chair and ask, "How are we doing together?" With that question he created space for both of us to reflect on our working relationship and to openly examine any obstacles or unfinished business.

It was only much later that I realized what a significant gift that question was. By working together as a lay-ordained team, we needed to face the power differential of our partnership. He was always the pastor, and when I needed him to be my pastor (as I did on numerous occasions), we were both able to move back into those roles. It was the regular evaluation of our working relationship, however, that created freedom for me to be both collaborator and parishioner.

The issue of gender. Way back then—in the 1960s and '70s, it was not so common for women and men to lead together in truly collaborative partnerships (it still isn't all that common in the church). Though we both enjoyed the support of our spouses for our common work, it was still necessary for us to be attentive to appropriate boundaries.

What was just as important, however, was our respect for and trust in each other. Marcus always treated me as an equal. Because of my professional background in public education, I also expected to be treated as an equal.

Male-female collaboration in leadership has potential for much stronger, more creative teams than single-gender teams.

I've since come to believe that male-female collaboration in leadership has potential for much stronger, more creative teams than single-gender teams. When women and men have healthy self-images and truly respect each other as equals, an energy is released that enhances and strengthens the work of ministry. We miss the fullness God intends when either women or men work alone as leaders in mixed-gender settings.

Developing leaders. No matter how congregations choose to develop leadership, what is essential is that the path be clear. Everyone should know how new leaders—both women and men—are called and equipped for ministry. The ongoing growth of each community of faith is dependent upon Spirit-led leaders who guide the congregation's ministries of worship, witness, peacemaking, pastoral care, teaching, serving, finance and care of creation.

Because of their role, pastors often have the broadest view of the leadership needs of a congregation. Thus a key task for pastors is giving oversight to leadership development—paying attention to spiritual formation as well as training people in the arts and skills of leadership. Depending upon the size of the congregation, pastors may not be able to personally collaborate with each lay leader. But the oversight of the leadership development system is clearly in their bailiwick. Whatever the leadership needs, pastors are called to pray, look for signs of leadership potential and create a hospitable environment in which the gifts of all the saints will flourish for the sake of God's reign in the world. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Enlisted**—Jennifer Davis-Sensenig
- **Redeeming the powers, redeeming ourselves** —Lisa Schirch

Executive Board sets goals for biennium

'Now is the time to act,' Executive Director Jim Schrag says to new board.

Meeting Sept. 26-28 in Newton, Kan., the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board (EB) agreed "joyfully" to accept "its leadership responsibility as the visible center of the church and its role to encourage the vitality of all parts of the church and measure their effectiveness."

In his "state of the church" report, Executive Director Jim Schrag said that "if we are not more integrating we will default to be more disintegrating." He called for looking at how decisions affect congregations. One goal, he said, is that by Columbus 2009, all entities of Mennonite Church USA beyond congregations "work together as one."

This working together toward integrating things, he said, needs "one overarching system of churchwide communication, funding appeals that simplify things for givers, one source of focused leadership for the call to be missional and denominational ministry from Executive Leadership (EL) staff that assists frontline leaders—conference ministers and pastors."

He called upon the board to evaluate our organizations from the viewpoint of congregations and to use the Church Member Profile as a road map. While there is a continuity with previous EBs, he said, this biennium is crucial. "Now is the time to act."

The EB took him seriously. The 17 members present (out of 18), including seven new ones, divided into three groups and met in three separate sessions to set priorities, consider what kind of leadership EL can provide and what resources and commitments EL needs.

As a result, the EB decided that its "key work ... in this biennium is to

- lead the church in prayer and discernment so that we can follow our missional calling to invite others to follow Jesus, nurture congregations of many cultures, call and train leaders and partner with the broader body of Christ around the world;
- help the church claim its vision and identity as a contrast community consistent in word and deed;
- integrate and streamline churchwide structures to help all parts of the church work together to strengthen the ministry of congregations so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world."

The board discussed two items presented to delegates at San José in July: an open letter to congregations from a churchwide delegation to Israel/Palestine (see July 3, page 19) and a resolution on national identity.

The EB refrained from endorsing the letter but agreed to "commend to congregations for study the noted resources and to consider the actions recommended in the open letter."

The resolution on national identity called "for resources that help us live faithfully in Christlike ways, sometimes at odds with our national culture." After noting the tension of wanting to engage the resolution and respond to it in a timely manner, the EB agreed to hear from the Constituency Leaders Council, then develop a plan and appoint a task force to work with the board in responding to the resolution.

The board met with pastors and conference leaders from Western District and South Central conferences and with students from Hesston and Bethel colleges. The conference leaders noted that it is increasingly difficult to serve congregations with fewer financial resources.

College students expressed concern that they had not learned the full measure of God's story in their congregations and asked how the church is planning to train and equip future church leaders.

In other areas, the EB

- approved in principle a budget of $2.1 million for EL ministries for the fiscal year ending Jan. 31, 2009;
- reviewed plans for a joint meeting with Mennonite Church Canada in Winnipeg, July 8-10, 2008, on "At the Crossroads: Promise and Peril (Deuteronomy 4:1-9)";
- heard that a preliminary financial report for the San José 2007 assembly anticipates a loss of about $175,000;
- reaffirmed its commitment to the building project for a new Mennonite offices building adjacent to the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary campus in Elkhart, Ind.—*Gordon Houser*

If we are not more integrating we will default to be more disintegrating.
—Jim Schrag

Paul Schrag

Visible center of the church: Executive Board members pray for Mennonite Church USA moderator Sharon Waltner (center), who wears a prayer shawl.

MCC continues conversation with Iran

Mennonite Central Committee organizes third meeting with Ahmadinejad.

Melissa Engle

Bert Lobe, Mennonite Central Committee interim executive director, pins a gold dove onto the lapel of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Amid growing tensions between Iran and the United States, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) coordinated a Sept. 26 meeting between Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and more than 100 religious leaders from the United States and Canada.

The meeting, held in New York City, is the third such dialogue MCC has helped organize between the Iranian president and U.S. religious leaders. Ahmadinejad was in New York to address the opening sessions of the 62nd United Nations General Assembly.

MCC is committed to dialogue that reaches across faiths—and that was an important goal of this meeting, says Bert Lobe, interim executive director of MCC.

"Our intent was to host a conversation in which we could all speak out of the religious traditions that nurture us," Lobe says. "And we did that."

The dialogue grew out of MCC's 17-year presence in Iran. This was the third meeting that MCC has helped organize between religious leaders and the Iranian president. Lobe and Ron Flaming, MCC's director of international programs, stress that they continued to ask hard questions of Ahmadinejad during the dialogue.

Lobe told Ahmadinejad, "Mr. President, we need you to acknowledge publicly the tremendous suffering of the Jewish people before and during World War II."

Flaming noted that "we are deeply disturbed when your comments about the Holocaust seem to minimize or question this dark chapter of the 20th century."

He said many people have interpreted Ahmadinejad's rhetoric as a threat to destroy the state of Israel.

"This does not match what some of us have heard you say privately, where you stated that there is not a military solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict," Flaming said. "If it is not your intention to destroy Israel, for the sake of understanding, for the sake of peace, for the sake of a bridge, we urge you to clearly and publicly say so."

Ahmadinejad's comments focused more broadly on what he called the most important issue facing humankind—divine will and grace. He said God asked people to build a world of brotherhood, peace and justice and that prophets such as Abraham and Moses encouraged humans to be kind and just. He spoke of the commonalities of prophets' urgings to serve God, defend the rights of the oppressed and work against tyranny.

News outlets such as *The New York Times* characterized the meeting as friendly. Lobe notes that a primary goal was to acknowledge the issues that the president's words have raised but also to speak about them in a gracious and respectful manner.

"To demonstrate mutual respect and graciousness in this conversation blunts the demonization which is part of the current rhetoric of both governments," Lobe said later.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

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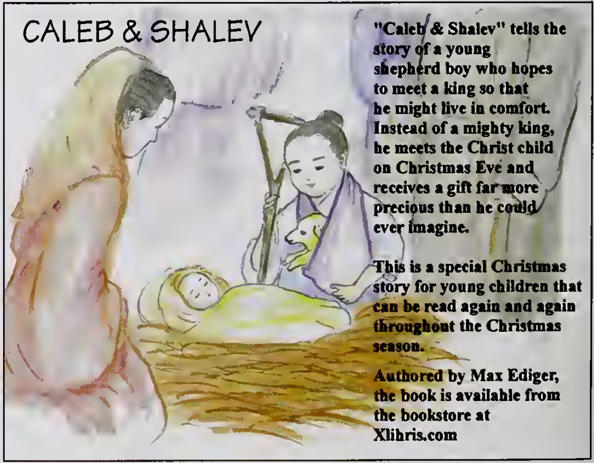

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Mennonite Church USA representatives at meeting

Patricia Shelly, professor of Bible and religion at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and an Executive Board member, was one of 125 who joined in the interfaith encounter with Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Shelly also visited Iran with 13 Americans in February and met with a variety of government, academic and religious leaders. Ahmadinejad's words to the ecumenical Christian group on that day meshed with things she had heard him say during the February visit to Iran, Shelly says.

"I don't doubt he's a politician," Shelly says, "but he's also very religiously focused, very grounded in his faith as a basis for what he's doing. He's not the only world leader who perhaps does not live out his faith as well as he could. Religious people make problematic decisions and take problematic positions. I can believe he is religious and still disagree with him politically."

Jim Schrag, Mennonite Church USA executive director, and Leonard Dow, a Mennonite pastor from Philadelphia, attended the meeting to represent Mennonite Church USA along with Shelly.—*Melanie Zuercher of Bethel College*

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Jordan's Christians leave their country

Anna Groff

Josh Weaver, left, and Jack Hijazin meet at the Mennonite Central Committee office in Amman, Jordan.

The number of Christians in Jordan are few and perhaps decreasing, but interfaith conversations are still necessary, according to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) staff.

Five percent of Jordan is Christian (the rest Muslim), and that number includes Christian Iraqi refugees, says Jack Hijazin, who works for MCC in its Middle East headquarters in Amman, Jordan.

George Richert, MCC representative for the Middle East at the time of the interview in September, said, "Jordan is relatively free for interfaith dialogue." He said he encourages MCC to prioritize that type of work in Jordan.

Hijazin said that for so many years, people in Jordan did not talk about interfaith issues, so many people are unprepared for potential faith tensions.

Unlike the heavily academic work of the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies in Amman, MCC works to address interfaith issues in a more practical way. Few people read the materials from the institute, Hijazin said.

So, in a city in the North, Ajlun, MCC will fund a conference for the community planned by several priests for March or April of 2008.

The conference, for Christians and Muslims, will address the themes of the Amman Message, a statement issued in 2004 by King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein that calls for unity and tolerance in the Muslim world.

Pearl Richert, George's spouse and another MCC representative, said an interfaith connection already existed in the community of Wahadneh, near Ajlun, between a priest and an iman (a Muslim priest).

For five years, MCC workers have worked with this priest, who wants to be a "voice of peace in

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Still, Mennonite Central Committee supports interfaith efforts in Jordan.

the community" and has carried that out through creating a peace garden. He continues his work with this conference.

In Jordan, about half the Christians are Jordanian, and the other half are Iraqi. In fact, the Iraqi Christians could possibly outnumber the Jordanian Christians, says Hijazin.

There are approximately 750,000 refugees from Iraq living in Jordan, and some sources report closer to 1 million. The total population of Jordan is 5.8 million.

Even with the influx of Christians from Iraq, the Christians in Jordan decline, since many leave the country to work abroad.

George said he has not met a Christian who does not have a family member living in the United States or another country.

In a culture where clan and tradition is important to identity, many still choose to leave their family to work elsewhere.

For those that remain, and all Jordanian people, the Iraq war continues to burden their economy.

Housing and other costs of living have risen, but wages and supplies have remained the same, says Josh Weaver, one of the first two Service and Learning Together (SALT) volunteers for Jordan, who teaches English in Karak.

George said the money received from the United States, $5.75 million, is "not enough" for the Jordanian government and does not amount to what was requested for public assistance for the refugees.

Jordan does have a history of refugees. In an interview in September, Senator Akel E. Biltaji described Jordan as a "melting pot" for many tribes of the Arab world.

For example, more than 1.8 million Palestinians live in Jordan.

A country with no natural resources, Jordan relies on its tourism industry. Visitors can see Petra, an archaeological site named one of the New Seven Wonders of the World, the Dead Sea and many biblical sites.

However, tourism depends on people continuing to come to Jordan, and the country remaining safe and neutral in the middle of many countries in turmoil, Weaver adds.

From the Amman headquarters, MCC continues projects in Iraq and aids "uprooted Iraqis," Hijazin says. MCC prioritizes the people still living in Iraq, as they are the families with fewer resources to leave the country.

The first Iraqis who moved had money and resources, and many became successful with real estate in Jordan. However, the last wave is more desperate, says Hijazin.

The MCC Middle East office, which represents Jordan, Palestine, Iraq and Iran is going through leadership transition this fall.

In September, George and Pearl ended their positions, and Daryl and Cindy Byler begin their work as MCC regional co-representatives.—*Anna Groff*

Jordan is relatively free for interfaith dialogue.
—George Richert

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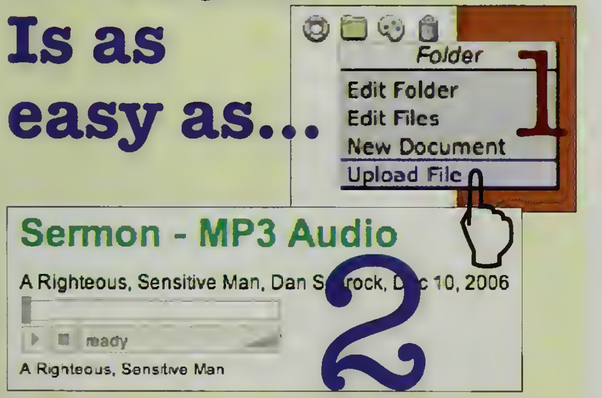
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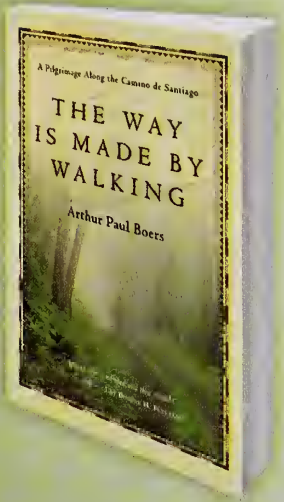
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Arthur Paul Boers describes his month-long journey on the Camino de Santiago in Spain, a classic pilgrimage route to the ossuary of St. James. He discovers a paradigmatic concept he calls "focal living," a way of living as a true part of one's social and ecological context.

ARTHUR PAUL BOERS (D.Min., Northern Baptist Theological Seminary) is an ordained minister in the Mennonite Church USA and an associate professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana.

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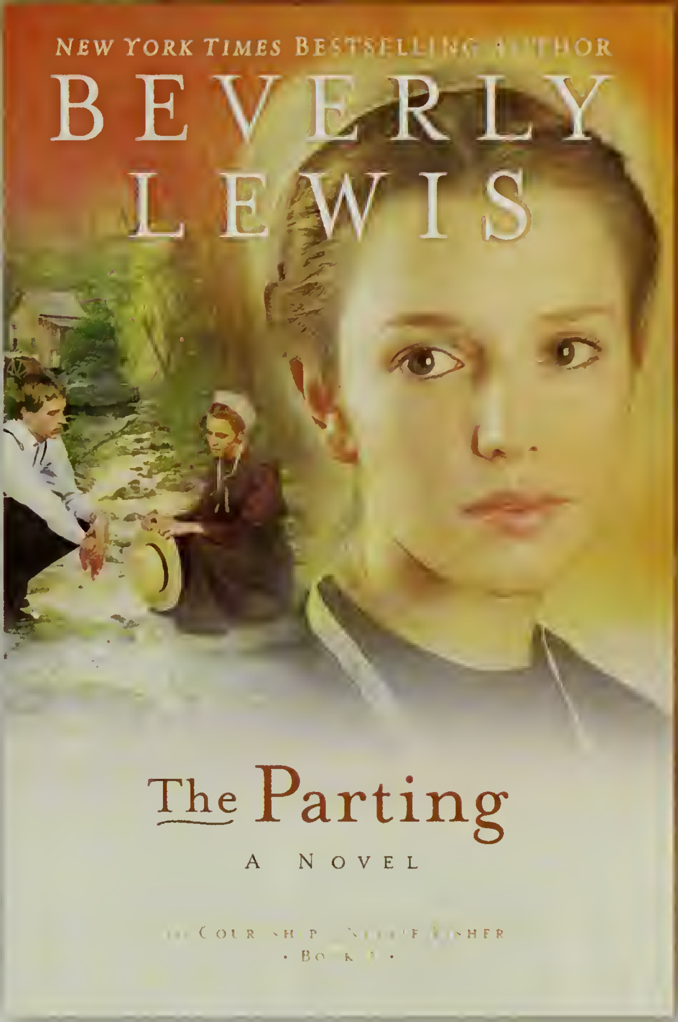
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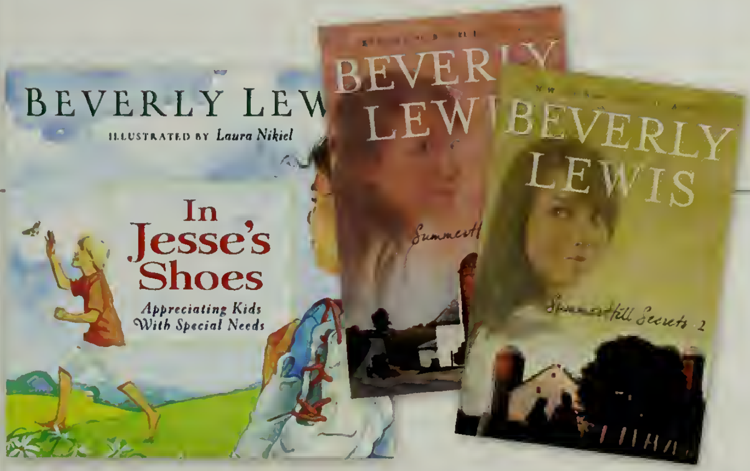
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CALENDAR

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The ***annual meeting and banquet*** of the Southeast Anabaptist Historical Society will be held 7 p.m. Jan. 25, 2008, at **Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla.**, with Peter Wiebe as the speaker.

WORKERS

Bowman, Randall L., was ordained as associate pastor at Lichty Mennonite Church, East Earl, Pa., on June 10.

Brubaker, Shirley Yoder, began a term as interim pastor at Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., on Sept. 1.

Burkholder, Kenneth R., was ordained as pastor at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie, Pa., on Sept.16.

Freed, Richard L., retired as deacon at Bethlehem Community Fellowship, Bethlehem, Pa., on Sept. 1.

Gerber, James, ended a term as interim pastor at Wildwood Mennonite Church, Engadine, Mich., on Sept. 30.

Janzen, Peter, was ordained as pastor at First Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, Ind., on Sept. 30.

Johnson, Jesse, began a term as children's minister at Washington Community Fellowship, Washington D.C., on Sept. 16.

Jones, Danny, was licensed as pastor at Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Ind., on Sept. 9.

Landis, John G., was installed as assistant pastor at Krall's Mennonite Church, Lebanon, Pa., on June 10.

Osborne, Millard, began a term as interim pastor for pastoral care at Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., on Sept. 1.

Vega, Juan, was installed as pastor at Iglesia Menonita del Buen Pastor, Goshen, Ind., on Sept. 16.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bartel, Elisa Joy, Sept. 19, to Alex and Sheri Rosfeld Bartel, Manhattan, Kan.

Bolyard, Nada Lyn, May 5, to Brian and Tracy Miller Bolyard, Kidron, Ohio.

Boone, Harper May, Aug. 8, to Jason and Joni Boone, Raleigh, N.C.

Burke, Ryan Patrick, Aug. 23, to Mark and Charlene Rush Burke, Telford, Pa.

Cox, Shenandoah Rose, Aug. 16, to Tim and Sandy Longenecker Cox, Harrisonburg, Va.

Ediger, Cale Matthew, July 25, to Ben and Steph McGinty Ediger, Dalton, Ohio.

Himes, Naomi Erin, Aug. 22, to Kevin and Jen Grim Himes, Apple Creek, Ohio.

Jantz, Calvin Dale, Sept. 18, to Rodney and Jennifer Geers Jantz, Inola, Okla.

Kroeker, Kaleb Dean, Sept. 7, to Karl and Cheri Norsworthy Kroeker, Inola, Okla.

Lyndaker, Andrew Palmer, June 4, to Steven and Shereen Palmer Lyndaker, Lowville, N.Y.

Miller, Lillian Beth, Aug. 11, to Joel and Abbie Bauman Miller, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Puljek-Shank, Isak Glenn, Sept. 20, to Randy and Amela Puljek-Shank, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

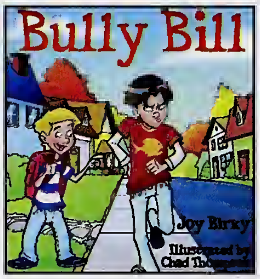
Rodriguez, Adelyn Olivia, Aug. 4, to Elroy and Rebecca Lengacher Rodriguez, Raleigh, N.C.

Ryder, Jaxon Timothy, June 10, to Phil and Danica Salsbury Ryder, Mooresville, N.C.

Schultz, Mitchell Thomas, Aug. 22, to Ronald Thomas and Carla Steiglitz Schultz, New Haven, Ind.

Sommers, Lauren Hope, Sept. 3, to Allen and Penny Wells Sommers, Millersburg, Ohio.

New Fall Titles from Herald Press



Bully Bill
Joy Birky. Illustrated by Chad Thompson.
Bully Bill is like all bullies: he thinks that because he can fight, he can get his own way. But when he encounters another boy, who makes friends by helping others, Bill becomes curious about how this happens. This story for ages 6 and up can serve as a springboard for parent-child conversations on the subject of bullying, being kind to enemies, and using love to overcome evil and meanness.
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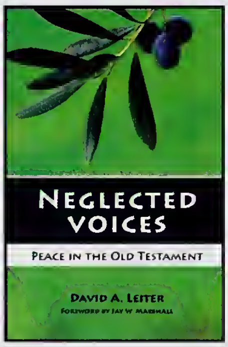

Neglected Voices
Peace in the Old Testament
The Bible has a reputation for being about violence in the Old Testament and about peace in the New Testament. David A. Leiter deconstructs that oversimplified notion as he explores passages in which God calls for the making of peace. By identifying key typologies, Leiter shows the Old Testament's relevance to today's struggles for peace.
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Yoder, Cadance Ann, Sept. 29, to Gentry and Michelle Miller Yoder, Kalona, Iowa.

Yoder, Phoebe Marie, Sept. 28, to Benjamin and Elizabeth Finley Yoder, Onalaska, Wis.

MARRIAGES

Bass/Sanderson: Jennifer Bass, Milwaukie, Ore., and Bryce Sanderson, Milwaukie, July 19, at Molalla River State Park, Canby, Ore.

Bone/Njali: Charles Robert Bone, Mt. Airy, Md., and Yoko Njali, Royersford, Pa., Aug. 18, at Vincent Mennonite Church, Spring City, Pa.

Burns/Himes: Ashley Burns, Dalton, Ohio, and Jared Himes, Dalton, May 26, at Salem Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Bush/Mock: Peter J. Bush, Parkesburg, Pa., and Rebecca Mock, Davidsville, Pa., July 21, at Thomas Mennonite Church, Holsopple, Pa.

Campbell/Wirick: Laura Campbell, Grand Rapids, Mich., and Lee Wirick, West Liberty, Ohio, Sept. 2, in Grand Rapids.

Doty/Fitzwater: Ryan Doty, Wapakoneta, Ohio, and Amber Fitzwater, Dalton, Ohio, June 16, at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Fougeron/Welsch: Katie Fougeron, Milford, Neb., and Peter Welsch, Milford, Aug. 3, at Magnolia Hotel, Omaha, Neb.

Franzese/Otto: Kristy Franzese, Moon Twp, Pa., and Christopher Otto, Salisbury, Pa., Sept. 2, at Ohio United Presbyterian, Hopewell, Pa.

Garrett/Steiner: Brittany Garrett, Dublin, Ohio, and Tim Steiner, West Liberty, Ohio, Aug. 10, in Oklahoma City, Okla.

Gerber/Steiner: Tara Gerber, Kidron, Ohio, and Denver Steiner, Orrville, Ohio, Sept. 30, at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Gingerich/Wagner: Adam Gingerich, Aurora, Ore., and Erin Wagner, Lititz, Pa., Aug. 19, at the groom's family home, Aurora.

Hofer/Phibbs: Galen Hofer, Denver, and Stephanie Phibbs, Denver, Sept. 22, at Shadowcliff Lodge, Grand Lake, Colo.

Hoffman/Peddigree: Joseph Hoffman, Telford, Pa., and Ashli Peddigree, Telford, Aug. 25, at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Hosman/Williams: Timothy Hosman, Denver, and Dana Williams, Denver, Sept. 9, at First Mennonite Church, Denver.

Kim/Showalter: Joo Yeon Kim, Seoul, South Korea, and Daniel Showalter, West Liberty, Ohio, Sept. 10, in Seoul.

Miller/Walker: Greg Miller, Hartville, Ohio, and Sarah Walker, Sept. 22, at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Nafziger/Spurgeon: Ezra Nafziger, Pottstown, Pa., and Gina Spurgeon, Lansdale, Pa., July 21, in Phoenixville, Pa.

Roebuck/Yoder: Meagan Roebuck, Mogadore, Ohio, and Jonathan Yoder, Uniontown, Ohio, Sept. 28, at Hartville Mennonite Church, Hartville, Ohio.

Shirk Charles/Wiens: Laura Shirk Charles, Brooklyn, N.Y., and Matthew G. Wiens, Brooklyn., June 16, at Friends Meeting House, New York, N.Y.

Spory/Whitney: Beth Spory, Front Royal, Va., and Christopher Whitney, Front Royal, July 27, at Rivendale Commons, Front Royal.

Thomas/Winn: Lacie Joy Thomas, Thomas Mills, Pa., and Ian Winn, Newvill, Pa., Aug. 4, at Kingsgap State Park, Newvill.

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DEATHS

Bauer, Mildred F. Miller, 89, Hanston, Kan., died Sept. 15. Spouse: John Bauer. Parents: Edward D. and Emma Miller. Children: Judy Entz, Jim; three grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 23 at Hanston Mennonite Church.

Dean, Beth Anne Beisel, 45, Elkton, Va., died Aug. 12 of cancer. Spouse: Donald Ray Dean. Parents: Leroy Clair and Mary Jane Fronzoli Beisel. Children: Heaven Leigh Dean, Patrick Dean. Funeral: Aug. 15 at Kaufman Mennonite Church, Davidsville, Pa.

Gingerich, William "Bill" A., 88, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 21. Spouse: Marian Foster Gingerich. Parents: Albert and Josephine Miller Gingerich. Children: Dick, Keith; four grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 24 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Goshow, Abram M., 88, Souderton, Pa., died Aug. 15. Spouse: Miriam Detweiler Goshow. Parents: Abram and Lizzie Moyer Goshow. Children: David, James N., Karen M. Henrichsen, Carroll; 10 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 19 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Graber, Roberta Mae Shertz, 74, West Liberty, Ohio, died Sept. 15 following an extended illness. Spouse: Harry L. Graber. Parents: Harold and Edna Schertz. Children: Cheryl Shank, Rhonda Blosser, Rodney, Charles; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 20 at Bethel Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Gross, William E., 87, Souderton, Pa., died Aug. 23. Spouse: Arlene Swartley Gross. Parents: Elmer M. and Ellen A. Moyer Gross. Children: Jane Frankenfield, Gem Miller; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 26 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Gunden, Elton August, 86, Naples, Fla., died Sept. 4 of cancer. Spouse: Leota Marjorie Nafziger Gunden. Parents: Christian J. and Agnes Albrecht Gunden. Children: Rebecca Jane Gunden Smith, Barbara Joan Gunden Thomas, Steven Jay, Carol Elaine Gunden; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 8 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Hockman, Anna G. Shantz, 96, Perkasie, Pa., died Sept. 8. Spouse: Howard S. Hockman (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Katie Gehman Schantz. Children: Ruth Yoder, Loraine Allebach, Paul, John; 10 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 12 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Howe, Benjamin F., 92, Buhler, Kan., died Sept. 16. Spouse: Patricia Bolte Howe. Spouse: Lucille Jones Howe (deceased). Parents: Frank and Goldie Dotie Howe. Children: Frank, Rex, Arlene Furr, Pat Shepperd, Jerry Bolte, Les Bolte; 13 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren; seven great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 21 at Buhler Mortuary.

"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

Lehman, Lydia Y. Umble, 101, Ephrata, Pa., died Sept. 2. Spouse: Gilbert N. Lehman (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Fannie Yost Umble. Children: Dorothy Lehman, Marian Lehman, Mary Jane Martin, Joseph, Doris Frey; 13 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 6 at Ephrata Mennonite Church.

Miller, Victor, 87, Elkhart, Ind., died Sept. 24. Spouse: Marie Peters Miller. Parents: Joseph and Amelia Delagrange Miller. Children: Carol Histand, Vici Vogel, Terry; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 29 at Central Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Nissley, Arthur R., 91, Lititz, Pa., died Aug. 20. Spouse: Ruth Mylin Nissley (deceased). Parents: Amos B. and Annie Reist Nissley. Children: Carol A. Fisher, Gerald M.; two grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 23 at Landis Homes Retirement Community Chapel, Lititz.

Roth, Beatrice Yoder, 93, Souderton, Pa., died Aug. 15. Spouse: Paul M. Roth (deceased). Parents: Levi L. and Maude Esther Yoder Hartzler. Children: Paul, Nelson, Priscilla Ziegler, Dwight, Philip; 12 grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 18 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Schlabaugh, Martha Glick, 94, Kalona, Iowa, died Sept. 19. Spouse: Ralph Schlabaugh (deceased). Parents: John A. and Magdalena Miller Glick. Children: Ila Yoder, Merle; three grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 22 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Schlabaugh, Ralph, 90, Kalona, Iowa, died July 29. Spouse: Martha Glick Schlabaugh (deceased). Parents: Mahlon and Katie Miller Schlabaugh. Children: Ila Yoder, Merle; three grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 1 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

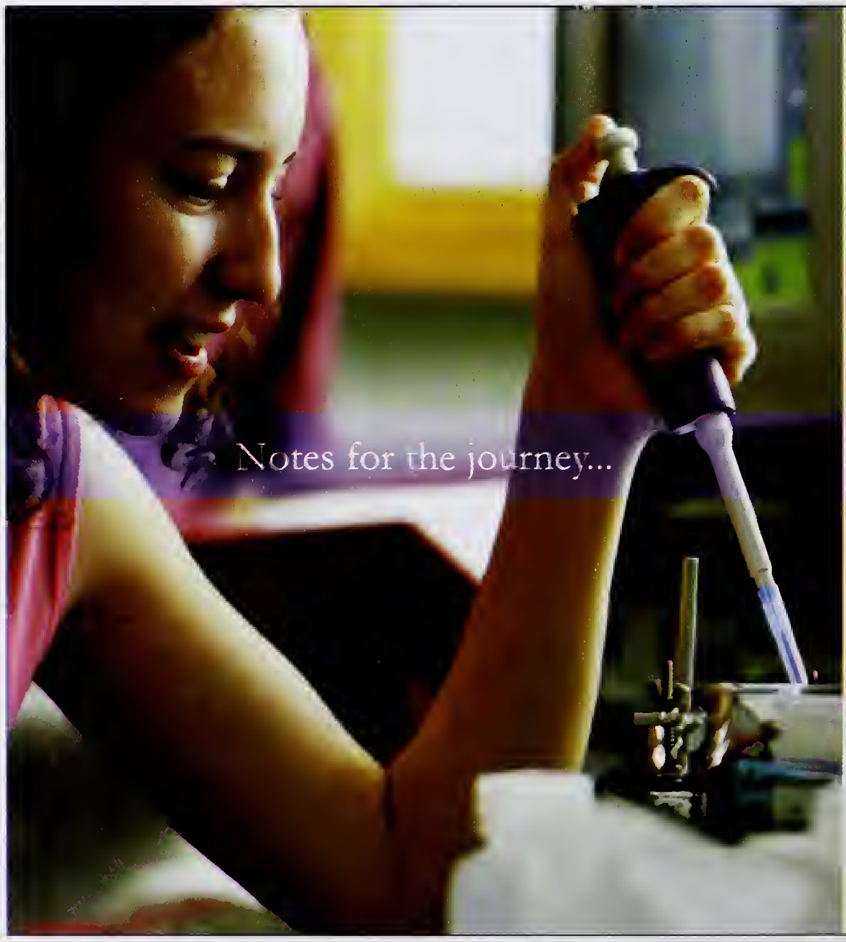
Tahara, Sandra Lorraine Buchtel, 73, Middlebury, Ind., died July 5. Spouse: Tom Tetsuo Tahara. Parents: Morris and Lois Hershberger Buchtel. Children: Terrance Lee, Robin Kay Miller, Timothy Wade, Kelly Jon; seven grandchildren. Funeral: July 10 by Pleasant Oaks Mennonite Church at Middlebury Church of the Brethren.

Waltner, Dorothy Schmidt, 73, Freeman, S.D., died Sept. 23 of cancer. Spouse: John Dean Waltner. Parents: Abraham and Frieda Deckert Schmidt. Children: Terry, Tony, Tom, Heidi Pepper; six grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 26 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Widmer, E. Urbane, 94, Canby, Ore., died Sept. 11. Spouse: Beulah Roth Widmer (deceased). Children: Arlen "Woody," Darlene Kauffman, Charlotte Everts, LaVonne Widmer; nine grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Sept. 15 at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, Ore.

Yoder, Illa Mae Erb, 79, Kalona, Iowa, died Sept. 27. Spouse: D. Paul Yoder. Parents: Louis and Mabel Roth Erb. Children: Jerry, Mary Holsopple, Merle, Ellsward "Pete," Rhonda Polizzotto, Kevin; 13 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 1 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Yoder, Sylvanus N., 89, Arthur, Ill., died July 23 of heart failure. Spouse: Fannie Chupp Yoder. Parents: Noah and Eliza Yoder Yoder. Children: Sarah Storm, Katie Haines, Elsie Gingerich, Cora Tyhurst, Levi; 13 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 27 at Arthur Mennonite Church.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Swamp Mennonite Church seeks a passionate ***full-time senior pastor*** to focus on preaching, pastoral care and equipping leaders. SMC is a Christ-centered, welcoming church (regular attendance of 140) that is a fellowship of believers committed to serving our community, living in peace and making Anabaptist/Mennonite faith and worship relevant in the Quakertown, Pa., area. Seminary training is required. Interested people should email the pastoral search committee at swampsec@fast.net.

Penn View Christian School is seeking an enthusiastic ***full-time director of advancement*** beginning in the fall of 2007. Responsibilities include organizing a comprehensive development program, coordinating public relations activities, marketing, overseeing all fund-raising events and building relationships with constituents, churches, alumni and donors. Ideal candidates will have three years of experience and a bachelor's degree in a related field of study. Penn View offers a Christ-centered, academically excellent education for 620 students in early childhood through eighth grade. Please send your resumé to Robert Rutt, executive director, Penn View Christian School, 420 Godshall Road, Souderton, PA 18964; phone 215-723-1196; email brutt@pennview.org.

"***Highlights of Italy***" March 10-20, 2008. Venice, Pisa, Florence, Tuscany, Sorrento, Amalfi Coastline, Pompeii, Vatican City, Colosseum, Sistine Chapel and many other sites in Rome. Base price only $2,399. Ed and Edie Bontrager, **TravelVenture Tours, Harrisonburg, Va.**; 540-438-8304 or eebontrag@aol.com for brochure.

MCC urgent opening: ***resource generation network director***, Akron, Pa. Gives leadership to the resource generation network consisting of staff in MCC offices across Canada and the United States. Coordinates the establishment of standards in fund-raising, setting goals and building network capacities. Experience in nonprofit fund-raising with excellent skills in communication and management required. Candidates of a gender or ethnic group typically underrepresented in this type of MCC assignment are encouraged to apply. Contact Kathy Jackson at krj@mcc.org or call 717-859-1151 for job description and further information.

***Accounting/administrative support*.** **Care and Share Shoppes, Souderton Pa.,** one of the largest MCC thrift shops in the United States, is seeking a part-time person to support administrative needs of the staff and perform accounting duties for the stores and business. Ability to maintain confidentiality and good organizational skills needed. Bookkeeping knowledge includes Quickbooks. Hours: 20-24 hours per week, Wed. to Fri. Contact: Care and Share Shoppes, Souderton Center, 785 Route 113, Souderton, PA 18964, 215-723-0315.

Salem Mennonite Church, located near the growing community of Tofield, Alta. (45 minutes Southeast of Edmonton), is seeking a ***lead pastor*** to minister to our congregation of 125 people. The successful candidate will have previous pastoral experience and/or a bachelor of theology degree or equivalent. Compensation will be commensurate with qualifications. Interested people should forward their resumés to: Carla Fendelet, secretary, Salem Mennonite Church, Box 56, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0; fax 780-662-0106; email cgfen@telus.net

South Hutchinson (Kan.) Mennonite Church, a growing, purpose-driven, multisite church, seeks ***full-time associate pastor*** to lead ministry at a second campus. Applicants should posses a love for people, vision for rural community outreach and a willingness to work within a multistaff team. Contact Gary Wolfer at gwolfer@gregory1.com or 620-543-2603.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.20 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.

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Rx for a nation of religious illiterates

Gordon Houser

One day some 30 years ago, after a literature class I was taking at a university, an older student who was especially interested in studying literature asked me how I knew so much about the Bible. Our professor had asked some questions about Scripture related to the text we were studying. I had been to Bible college and knew the Scripture references.

I told this man that I knew these references because I had studied Scripture. He was envious; he recognized that if he wanted to understand Western literature, he needed to have a good knowledge of the Bible.

Unfortunately, as Stephen Prothero makes clear in his book *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know—and Doesn't* (Harper San Francisco, 2007, $24.95), most people don't recognize this need.

Prothero makes a strong case that the United States is a nation of religious illiterates and that such ignorance has dangerous consequences in a world where religion plays an increasing role.

He then shows how this illiteracy has increased in the past century. He argues that "teaching about religion is an essential task for our educational institutions," that "the primary purpose of such teaching should be civic," i.e., "to produce citizens who know enough about Christianity and the world's religions to participate meaningfully—on both the left and the right—in religiously inflected public debates. High school and college graduates who have not taken a single course about religion cannot be said to be truly educated."

1. Name the four Gospels.
2. Name a sacred text of Hinduism.
3. What is the name of the holy book of Islam?
4. Where according to the Bible was Jesus born?
5. President George W. Bush spoke in his first inaugural address of the Jericho road. What Bible story was he invoking?
6. What are the first five books of the Hebrew Bible?
7. What is the Golden Rule?
8. "God helps those who help themselves." Is this in the Bible? If so, where?
9. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God." Is this in the Bible? If so, where?
10. Name the Ten Commandments.
11. Name the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism.
12. What are the seven sacraments of Catholicism?
13. What are the two religion clauses of the First Amendment?
14. What is Ramadan? In what religion is it celebrated?

Prothero gave his college students a religious literacy quiz (see box), and most of them flunked it. Unfortunately, according to a Gallup poll, born-again Christians are only marginally better informed about the Bible than other students.

This ignorance is reflected in debates between Christians. Prothero writes: "Believers don't disagree on theology much because theology has ceased to be remembered. They disagree instead on cultural politics—on 'family values.'"

Prothero wants the public schools to teach about religion, which is constitutional. Few do, and as a result, they are not religiously neutral but promote a "culture of disbelief."

This ignorance also shows up in the current popularity of books promoting atheism, such as *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins and *God Is Not Great* by Christopher Hitchens. These and others like them reflect the fundamentalism they abhor and are filled with inaccuracies and misunderstandings about Christianity.

Both these "atheists" and the "Left Behind" writers are heretical and unreasonable. But our nation of religious illiterates snap up their books without any seeming ability to discern what is true or even reasonable.

Literacy takes work and dedication. Not only the nation but the church has failed to do it.

The reviews below are available as podcasts at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

FILMS

In the Valley of Elah (R) is a powerful indictment on the war in Iraq while showing little from that war-torn country. "Inspired by real events," it tells the story of a military veteran (Tommy Lee Jones, in a masterful performance) whose son goes missing days after returning from Iraq. The son is found murdered, and Jones tries to investigate, while hampered by both military and civil authorities. Eventually a detective (Charlize Theron) agrees to help. The film is both a police procedural and a damning look at the effects of the Iraq War on the young men who are sent there to fight. The acting and writing are outstanding, though the story could use some balance in its depiction of Iraq War veterans. It's refreshing to see a film with a biblical allusion in its title (see article above), which refers to the place where David defeated Goliath.

BOOKS

Tokens of Trust: An Introduction to Christian Belief by Rowan Williams (Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, $16.95) engages statements from the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds. Williams, perhaps one of our wisest and most accessible contemporary theologians, sees belief as a relationship of trust. He writes, "What we say about God as maker of everything and what we say about God who meets us personally in forgiveness and renewal ought to be as closely allied as possible." Williams combines incisive theology with pastoral insight: "[God] is not going to be bored, disgusted or impatient with anything he has made, even when we have made a mess of it ourselves." He emphasizes God's eternal self-giving and freedom: "God never *starts* being in a loving relationship; it's an aspect of what he is eternally." This book is a gem.

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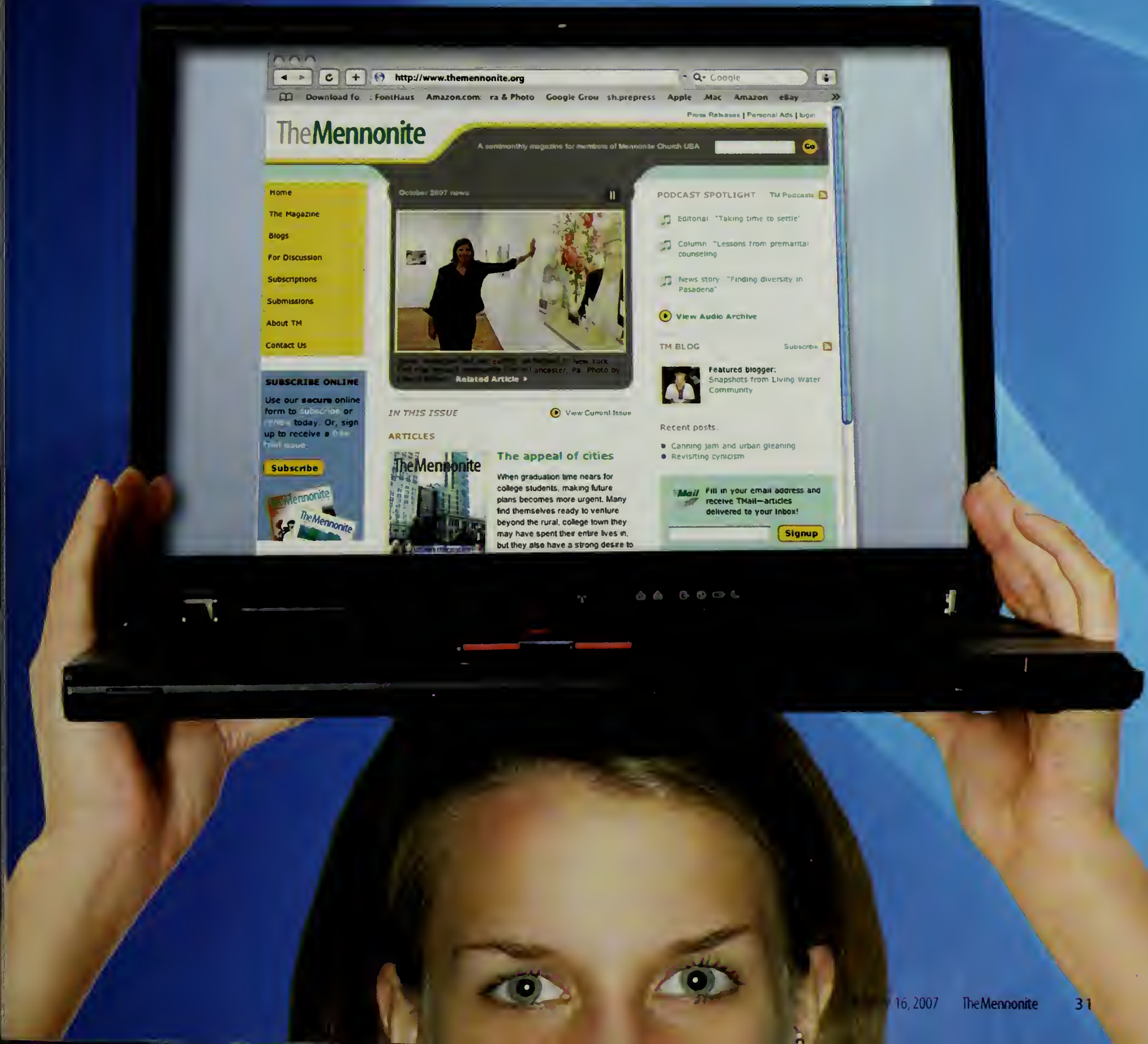

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When graduation time nears for college students, making future plans becomes more urgent. Many find themselves ready to venture beyond the rural, college town they may have spent their entire lives in, but they also have a strong desire to

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Gerald J. Mast is vice chair of the board of The Mennonite, Inc.

Faith and apocalypse

A moving scene toward the end of the film *Cold Mountain* depicts a dinner gathering around an outdoor table where people who had experienced profound loss during the Civil War thank God for the food and for their lives. This simple, profound image of gratitude following loss has been in my mind often during the past year—a time during which my community at Bluffton (Ohio) University suffered a tragic bus accident that took the lives of five students and during which I experienced the breakup of my marriage of 16 years.

For me, these losses will forever mark the 2006-2007 school year as a cataclysmic time, accompanied as they were by other disastrous events—the tragic school shooting a year ago in West Nickel Mines, Pa., the suicide of Lee Eshleman, the bloody massacre at Virginia Tech and, just weeks ago, a flood that engulfed Bluffton's campus and devastated many nearby communities. In the background was the drumbeat of larger, distant disasters—the endless bloodletting in Iraq, the genocide in Darfur and the ever-gloomier statistics projecting the devastating effects of global warming.

It would be wrong to forget the important differences in scope and intensity among these events. The genocide in Darfur is not of a piece with the breakup of a marriage. Yet for those who remain alive and committed to Christian faith, the losses associated with any personal or global disaster are occasions to walk by faith and not by sight.

The losses associated with any personal or global disaster are occasions to walk by faith and not by sight.

In the biblical tradition, disaster is often construed as both the result of sin and a context for remaking the world. The world is annihilated by a flood; God's people are uprooted and taken into exile; Job experiences the destruction of his family and property; Jesus is killed on a cross. The faithful response of God's people to such disasters is what we Anabaptists have called yieldedness: "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord," sighs Job. "Not my will but thine be done," murmurs Jesus.

Such yieldedness is often viewed as passive acceptance of reality. But true yieldedness is a witness to the watching world that the apparent world is not the true world. The real world is the one inaugurated by God's deliverance of Israel and by Jesus' life, death and resurrection. We who walk in the light of the resurrection know that Christ has conquered the powers of sin and death. While many of these disasters are the result of human failure and sin, we know the prayer of Jesus: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." All too often, we who are blinded by the powers of sin and death know not all that we do. We harm others and are harmed by others, not knowing one another or the long-term effects of our actions.

The good news of the gospel is that God forgives our blindness and is redeeming the groaning creation despite and even sometimes through our failures. Thus, the moment of disaster is for Christians a time of apocalypse, of seeking to align ourselves with the One who "makes wars cease to the ends of the earth," who "breaks the bow, and shatters the spear" and "burns the shields with fire" (Psalm 46:9). The renewed world that is manifested in the wake of apocalypse is not an unearthly ideal; it is instead the historical and material reality of God's reconciling people who have "come out of great tribulation" and "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb" (Revelation 7:14).

When, in the wake of the disaster of Hurricane Katrina, Mennonite Disaster Service discovered opportunities to remake itself, it yielded to God's purposes and God's Spirit as it was revealed following a horrific storm. When, in our own lives, we experience disasters, the truthful response is a posture of cross-bearing yieldedness to what John Howard Yoder called "the grain of the universe."

Yielding is neither an escape hatch from the world's troubles nor a formula for getting our way. It is rather the path of love, the path of those who follow Jesus Christ in life, against all worldly wisdom and habit. Even though we know this path to be narrow and hard to find, we share the journey with God's people and are guided by the Holy Spirit. And we experience joy and gratitude as our lives witness to the time when "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14).—*gjm*

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People-friendly good news

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

It was almost dark as we pulled alongside a house-barn structure in one of the 205 Isaan farming villages surrounding Borabu, Thailand. We took off our shoes and mounted steep stairs past roosting chickens to the living quarters on the second floor. A single light bulb illuminated a large open room that reminded me of a barn haymow except for an open hearth fire flickering in the kitchen area. The room was open and unfurnished, with some cooking utensils and clothes hanging from hooks along one wall. Gaps in the walls let the evening breeze waft through. Woven floor mats were rolled out for our home worship gathering. It was a simple but sacred space.

Trying to be culturally adaptive, I greeted people with folded hands in a prayer gesture that began at the upper body and then slid down accompanied by a slight bow, only to find out later I had missed subtle protocols. The younger should always initiate the greeting with the older. If you are greeting your elder or superior you should begin the gesture of folded hands higher.

I sat down on the mat with my feet extended to the center of the circle when I again needed to be prompted by Sheldon Sawatzky, Mennonite Mission Network director for East Asia: “Don’t point your heel or the sole of your feet at others. It’s an insult. You need to tuck your feet underneath or keep them behind you pointing away from the circle.” (Check Psalm 41:9.)

I felt honored to share in this time of singing, prayer and Bible study. The highlight of the evening was a 77-year-old grandmother sharing her story of coming to faith in Christ only three years earlier. Pat Houmphan, Mennonite Mission Network worker, gave me snatches of translation. “Buddhism was good, but Jesus showed us the way to heaven. We didn’t know. Someone had to come tell us.” She urged us to give our lives to Jesus and know the power of the Holy Spirit in overcoming the fear of the spirits.

My lesson from the emerging church in Borabu: Missional churches are culturally adaptive in order to reach people for Christ.

I couldn’t help but notice the swooping roofline on the new church meeting place being built by the Living Water Church. It mimics the typical Buddhist temple. It tells the community this is sacred space for religious practice.

As Mennonites we have tended to do things in a way that emphasizes our difference from the rest of the world and even other Christian groups. I might have said, “Whatever we do, we don’t want our church to look like a Buddhist temple. We don’t want people to get us confused.”

Another example of cultural adaptation had to do with providing English seminars for the community. I might have said, “Let’s do these at the church so we can get people in the doors.” Mission worker Pat’s questions are: How can we identify with the community? How can we establish credibility with our neighbors? How can we raise our visibility in the city? Those are better questions. Pat arranged for the English seminars to be hosted in area high schools. English seminars with teachers from the United States added stature to the school principals. It built connections with community leaders.

How can we be culturally adaptive in order to provide every possibility of connecting with people? How can we lower the barriers of weirdness and make it more possible to share the good news of Jesus Christ in a people-friendly way? How are we going to connect? How can we identify with the community, establish credibility with our neighbors and raise our visibility in the city?

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Mennonite Church USA

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Look at the past objectively

Re Ross Bender's letter (Readers Say, Oct. 2): It is always good to know more about the past. It is possible to be critical of some aspects of our Mennonite heritage, without any kind of self-hate because you have to look at the past objectively, as it impacts the present. And denial is not objective, especially not Holocaust denial.—*Bonnie Bergey, Souderton, Pa.*

Why start at the top with health-care access?

While I agree with much in the ACHE letter (Readers Say, Oct. 2), I take issue with a few of their statements.

If we can dare to address government concerning "the least of these," why are we starting at the "top," as they do in addressing this issue?

As a member of the church, I find no precedent in Scripture to first take care of the leaders or contracted "servants" prior to taking care of "the least of these."

Although this is suggested as a beginning model, I suggest again that we just might be starting at the wrong end. I do not believe the greatest lack of health-care insurance is at the top level of our church. I find it difficult to agree with the statement of strong affirmation on the vote at San José, since it appears somewhat like our congressional members voting to give themselves a pay raise.—*Luke M. Drescher, Harrisonburg, Va.*

The idol in our midst

Kudos to Steve Steiner for "The Idol in Our Midst" (Oct. 2). The Israeli military policy that many evangelicals support is nothing that Jesus would approve. Modern Israel follows the pattern of ethnic cleansing that the United States followed in its westward expansion—first encroachment and settlement, then provocation to violence, and finally military action, again and again.

However, Steiner failed to mention that evangelicals who support Israel also want to convert Jews. Certainly the Israelis have a problem with that. While I can't accept their reasoning, I still hope evangelicals succeed in getting a hearing for Jesus. Perhaps God has put some of his people on both sides of the conflict, evangelicals who sympathize with the Jews on one side, and Anabaptists who sympathize with the Palestinians on the other, both sides seeking to make the case for Jesus.

The Jewish authorities had a choice between Jesus and Barabbas. They chose Barabbas, and the spirit of Barabbas rules Israel today. (It also appears to rule the United States.)

The spirit of Barabbas drives the Arab cause as well. Our Lord is the only one with the credentials to bring peace, and he will bring Isaac and Ishmael together. That's the sort of thing we can expect from him.—*Philip E. Friesen, St. Paul, Minn.*

Thanks to Steve Steiner for opening a much-needed dialogue about grave injustices to Palestinians and the uncritical support of the modern secular state of Israel by millions of Christian Zionists. There are many different narratives by which to understand the hostilities and turmoil of the Middle East, and probably all have some truth, while none is adequate for the whole story.

At the least, we ought to question as critically as we can every account that lines up with our own pernicious lust for power and privilege, especially when such accounts are fortified with highly selective Scripture passages to accommodate religious superstitions and justify the advance of our brand of nationalism and supremacy.

What are the forums, questions and protocols for this important but fearfully avoided discussion?—*Walter S. Friesen, Hesston, Kan.*

Right on to Steve Steiner. Those "Christians standing up and applauding the State of Israel" are being used by the Israelis, who otherwise have little in common with these right-wing Christians.

Fundamentalist Christians and Zionists who claim that Israel is the "promised land" forget that that promise was contingent on obedience to God. Since they broke that covenant hundreds of years ago, they may also have lost a claim to the land. About 14 million Christians live in the Middle East, many in Palestine, where Jews have destroyed 300-400 of their villages.

IN THIS ISSUE

On July 4 at the San José 2007 adult convention, Jennifer Davis Sensenig gave a sermon that she later adapted for this issue (page 8). She uses the Bible's image of combat gear from Ephesians 6 to call us to enlist in an "army of love." Lisa Schirch (page 12) provides an example of how that engagement with others in a Superpower nation might happen. She also challenges us to look at how our consumer-based lifestyle is related to the wars our country wages. Stanley Green (page 15) describes four phases of an Anabaptist missional journey, then outlines things he's learned about helping Mennonite Church USA become a missional people. In this issue's columns, Clarence Rempel (Grace and Truth, page 2) writes about lessons he learned from a trip to Thailand about the church being culturally adaptive. Scott Key (Speaking Out, page 18) offers ways we can work against war and work for peace. Gerald Shenk (Real Families, page 30) says that true wealth comes from a river of generosity.—*Acting editor*

Jimmy Carter in *Palestine Peace not Apartheid* declares that a "minority of Israelis occupying this area are occupying, confiscating and colonizing land that belongs to the Palestinians" [many are Christians], contradicting the peace agreement Carter brokered between Egypt and Israel, and violating a United Nations resolution.

With Steiner I wonder how the Jews can have forgotten the Holocaust only 75 years ago.—*Dellis Schrock, Fargo, N.D.*

Plea for U.S. leaders

Lately I have had to change from a negative prayer that calls for condemnation of President Bush and all his war-seeking advisers to a positive plea that he and they will be led to rise to the level of his proclaimed Christian faith as he realizes the contradictions between his political-military stance and the demands of Christian discipleship.—*Jacob (J.B.) Shenk, Goshen, Ind.*

The ramp-up to an attack upon Iran by Bush, Cheney and their enablers in Congress and elsewhere continues unabated. That is becoming clear from mounting evidence by investigative journalists and analysts willing to break away from mainstream media reporting. They describe how an unprovoked U.S. attack on Iran would violate both U.S. and international law and lead to a series of events likely to cascade into World War III.

Such an attack would be immoral, unjust and lead to destruction that would spread to other countries. U.S. leaders did it before in Iraq.

Who and how are we deploying our spiritual resources for effective resistance, i.e. standing in the way of this hell-bent drive toward unfettered warfare? Is it not time to discuss what shape the modern Confessing Church movement, which Dietrich Bonhoeffer initiated during the Third Reich's rise to power in Germany, is (or ought to be) taking?—*Clair Hochstetler, Goshen, Ind.*

The appeal of cities

Ideas that seem ordinary can also be radical. Shane Claiborne's *The Irresistible Revolution: living as an ordinary radical* says, "Radical is not something reserved for saints and martyrs."

I am an ordinary, 20-year-old radical, currently splitting residence between my home in Telford, Pa., and my Goshen (Ind.) College small group house. I'm not sure where I want to live after college, after reading "The Appeal of Cities" (Oct. 2), my uncertainty has only been further complicated. I never knew I shared a dream of living in a place like Denver, Pittsburgh or New York.

Sometimes I surf Wikipedia, looking up city skylines, climate statistics, public transportation grids and demographic make-ups. Yet after reading the article I surfed the Mennonite Voluntary Service Web site, searching for updates on service locations.

What if I moved to my hometown after graduation or, to fulfill my urban inclination, Philadelphia. What would happen if we all moved out, if we all decided to move somewhere deemed "ordinarily radical"?

Who knows if I will end up in southeastern Pennsylvania. It's a thought I'll consider. Moving home? Maybe it's just ordinary, but what if it's ordinarily radical?—*Sheldon Good, Goshen, Ind.*

Getting started in leadership

Thanks to Marlene Kropf for "Getting Started in Leadership" (Oct. 16), for her recognition of Marcus Smucker's important mentoring role while stating, "I also expected to be treated as an equal."

Marlene encourages congregations to invest in the church's healthy future by developing female and male leaders. Her assertion that men and women in "truly collaborative partnerships" holds the strongest potential for creative leadership gives us a signpost for the journey ahead.—*Jean Kilheffer Hess, East Petersburg, Pa.*

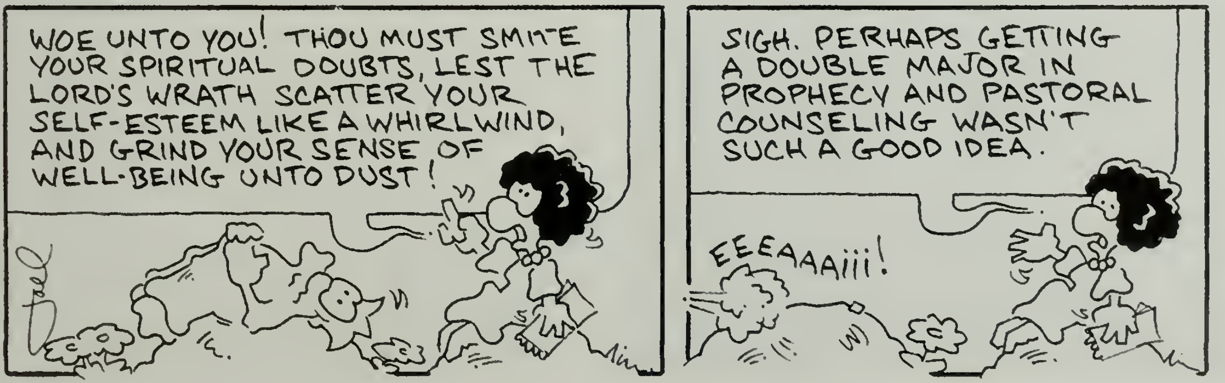
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Mennonites should offer alternatives to military action in Iraq: (107 votes)

- ○ Yes (85%)
- ○ No (11%)
- ○ Not sure (4%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


WOE UNTO YOU! THOU MUST SMITE YOUR SPIRITUAL DOUBTS, LEST THE LORD'S WRATH SCATTER YOUR SELF-ESTEEM LIKE A WHIRLWIND, AND GRIND YOUR SENSE OF WELL-BEING UNTO DUST!
SIGH. PERHAPS GETTING A DOUBLE MAJOR IN PROPHECY AND PASTORAL COUNSELING WASN'T SUCH A GOOD IDEA.
EEEAAAiii!

IN BRIEF

Are you hefted?

The word hefted is used to describe sheep that have an inbred sense of place, reports *Expository Times* (August). Sheep that are hefted can be left to roam freely, as they will not stray from the land they know well. Humans, too, have a strong sense of place: Who we are is tied closely to where we are. Our place doesn't necessarily have to be where we were born or raised; it can be any place where we have a sense of belonging and are connected to a natural landscape and observant of its seasonal rhythms—and, from a faith perspective, where we feel some connection with the sacred. —*The Christian Century*

Taking it literally

A new study by The Barna Group shows that Americans "remain confident that some of the most amazing stories in the Bible can be taken at face value." The nationwide survey asked adults their take on six well-known Bible stories, whether the story was "literally true, meaning it happened exactly as described in the Bible," or whether they thought the story was "meant to illustrate a principle but is not to be taken literally." [The resurrection] was the story most widely embraced. Three out of four adults said they interpreted that narrative literally. —*Christianity Today*

John Byers, MWC Koinonia member, dies

STRASBOURG, France—On Oct. 16, John A. Byers, 73, a longtime leader in the Brethren in Christ Church (BICC), died in Lancaster, Pa., after suffering a heart attack at his home.

In August, Byers was part of the eight-member international Koinonia Delegation sent to Zimbabwe by Mennonite World Conference. The team visited churches, institutions and projects and attended the national BICC conference there.

At the end of the visit, Byers said: "I am changed in how I live my life from now on as a member of a very privileged society. … The challenges for me are how to be most helpful to those sisters and brothers [in Zimbabwe]."

Back home, Byers reported on his Zimbabwe experience to the meeting of the General Conference Board of the BICC.

During Byers' 43-year ministry, he served on the boards of several educational institutions, in congregations in Ohio, California and Pennsylvania, and as a bishop beginning in 1978.

In May he joined the ministry team at the Messiah Village BICC in Mechanicsburg, Pa., as pastor of congregational care.

Byers is survived by Esther, his wife, four children, eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Mellissa Engle

Preserving an art tradition in Guatemala

Viviana Cucul Tun, 16, practices weaving a guipil, part of K'ekchi indigenous dress in San Juan Chamelco, Guatemala. She attends classes at Bezaleel, a K'ekchi Mennonite Education Center, which provides education for youth in Alta Verapaz. One of the school's aims is to preserve K'ekchi language, culture and traditions, including weaving. Mennonite Central Committee provides funds for the vocational arts classes, which also include sewing, carpentry, welding, organic agriculture and health care. MCC also works with Fundameno, a K'ekchi Mennonite foundation that gives scholarships for students to attend Bezaleel.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

CPT recalls team from Algonquin blockage

ROBERTSVILLE, Ont.—The Shabot Obaadjiwan and Ardoch Algonquin First Nations have agreed to a mediation process involving their representatives, the governments of Canada and Ontario, and the uranium exploration company Frontenac Ventures (FV).

CPT is seeking participants for an emergency delegation to Robertsville Mine for Nov. 14-16.

As stipulated by the mediation agreement, the Algonquins left the Robertsville Mine site on Oct. 12 after occupying it since June 28.

Christian Peacemaker Teams Canada recalled its violence reduction team from the Algonquin Blockade on Oct. 12.

Frontenac Ventures obtained a license under the Ontario Mining Act to carry out exploratory drilling on 60 square kilometers of unceded Algonquin land.

Neither FV nor the Ontario government consulted with the Algonquin people before FV began its uranium exploration program. Canadian courts rule that governments must consult indigenous peoples and accommodate their concerns before undertaking resource projects on their territories. —*CPT*

MCC ships aid to Nicaragua after hurricane

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is shipping canned meat and relief supplies worth more than $180,000 to communities devastated by Hurricane Felix in Nicaragua.

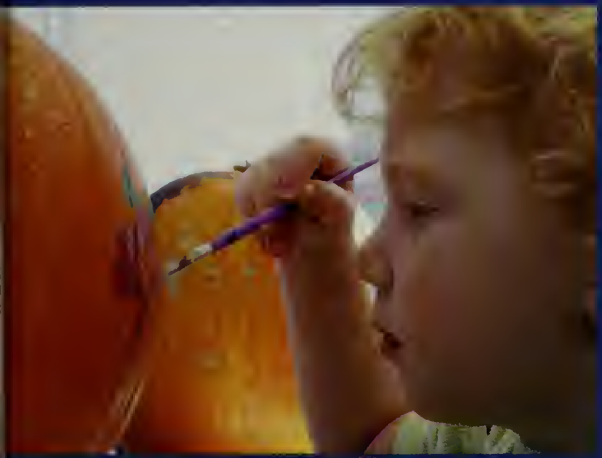
Felix struck northeastern Nicaragua as a powerful, category five hurricane on Sept. 4. MCC's aid will be distributed by a partner organization, Accion Medica Cristiana, to remote farming communities that lost homes and crops during the storm.

The affected population includes many Miskito Indians and other indigenous people who are among the poorest groups in Nicaragua, according to Belinda Forbes, a spokesperson for Accion Medica Cristiana.

Many local families will need food aid for the next six months because of the hurricane, Forbes says.

MCC is currently shipping 71,400 pounds of canned turkey to Nicaragua from its Material Resource Center in Ephrata, Pa. MCC is also planning to ship 2,000 relief kits and 5,000 health kits to Nicaragua.

Contributions should be designated "2007



Tom Sawin

ildren enjoy Harvest Day at Crossroads in Virginia

irl paints a pumpkin Sept. 29 at the fourth annual Harvest y at Crossroads Valley Brethren Mennonite Heritage Center Harrisonburg, Va. A thousand people attended the event, d hundreds of children participated in the crafts activities. ults listened to stories and music drawn from the Brethren d Mennonite heritage, assisted in harvesting sorghum to il molasses, observed blacksmiths fashioning hooks, nails d kitchen utensils, and watched thread being spun. *rossroads*

Hurricane Relief" and may be made at any MCC office or online at mcc.org/donate.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

Methodist bishop shares peace background

STAMFORD, Conn.—Bishop Sally Dyck, who grew up in a Mennonite community, spoke about holy conferencing to the Women's Division of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries during its Oct. 5-8 annual meeting.

Cassandra Heller

Sally Dyck

Dyck said she learned about peacemaking at an early age.

Now she and others would like to see an emphasis on peacemaking or "holy conferencing" implemented more widely across the denomination.

"While the United Methodist Church has not been a historic peace church, it's had the emphasis for many, many years," she told directors of the division.

Dyck considers peacemaking a "major function" of Christian discipleship.

She characterized holy conferencing as a "means of grace," a way of being open to what God has intended.

Noting that the word "confer" means "to mutually search for truth," she added, "How we make those decisions may be every bit as important as what they are."—*Linda Bloom*

New name for Shalom Foundation

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Media For Living is the new name for Shalom Foundation Inc., the 20-year-old nonprofit organization located in Harrisonburg that has provided printed outreach materials for churches and publishes community newspapers, *Living*, in three communities. The name change was one of the official actions of the Shalom board of directors holding its meeting on Oct. 19. —*Media for Living*

Duke professor speaks about food at CMU

WINNIPEG—Ellen Davis, professor of Bible and practical theology at Duke Divinity School, addressed the theme "Live Long on the Land: Food and Farming in Biblical Perspective" at the J.J. Thiessen Lectures Oct. 15-16 at Canadian Mennonite University.

Davis said if people knew how to value the land and how hard it is to grow food, farming would not be the most fragile sector of today's economy. She stated that "from an Old Testament perspective, the health of the land is the best index of the health or sickness of our covenant relationship with God." Looking at our culture's violent relationship to the earth, she suggested, we are failing to take this covenant seriously.—*Canadian Mennonite University*

Group meets to reduce handgun violence

AKRON, Pa.—Thirty-eight people from more than 15 congregations attended the annual Mennonite Central Committee East Coast peace building seminar at Philadelphia Mennonite High School Oct. 6. The day included prayer, education and action for reducing handgun violence. The event also built connections among peace advocates and congregations in Philadelphia; New York City; Lancaster, Pa.; and Reading, Pa.; that are seeking to reduce handgun violence in their communities.—*MCC*

MDS considers response to California wildfires

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Disaster Service plans to send a team to the site of recent wildfires in Southern California to determine how MDS might respond.

MDS staff member Andi Dube said Oct. 25 the team would go to California in the next few days to make initial contacts and investigate opportunities for MDS to help. "We'll be able to tell at that point what our response will be," he said.

Dube said it did not appear any Mennonite congregations or their members in the region had been directly affected by the fires.—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

—*compiled by Anna Groff*

IN BRIEF

Goshen College first in Indiana to offer ASL license

This fall, Goshen (Ind.) College became the first college in the state of Indiana to offer a license in American Sign Language (ASL) Teacher Education. The program will prepare graduates to teach ASL in grades 5-12 classrooms.—*Goshen College*

Art exhibits open at Hesston College

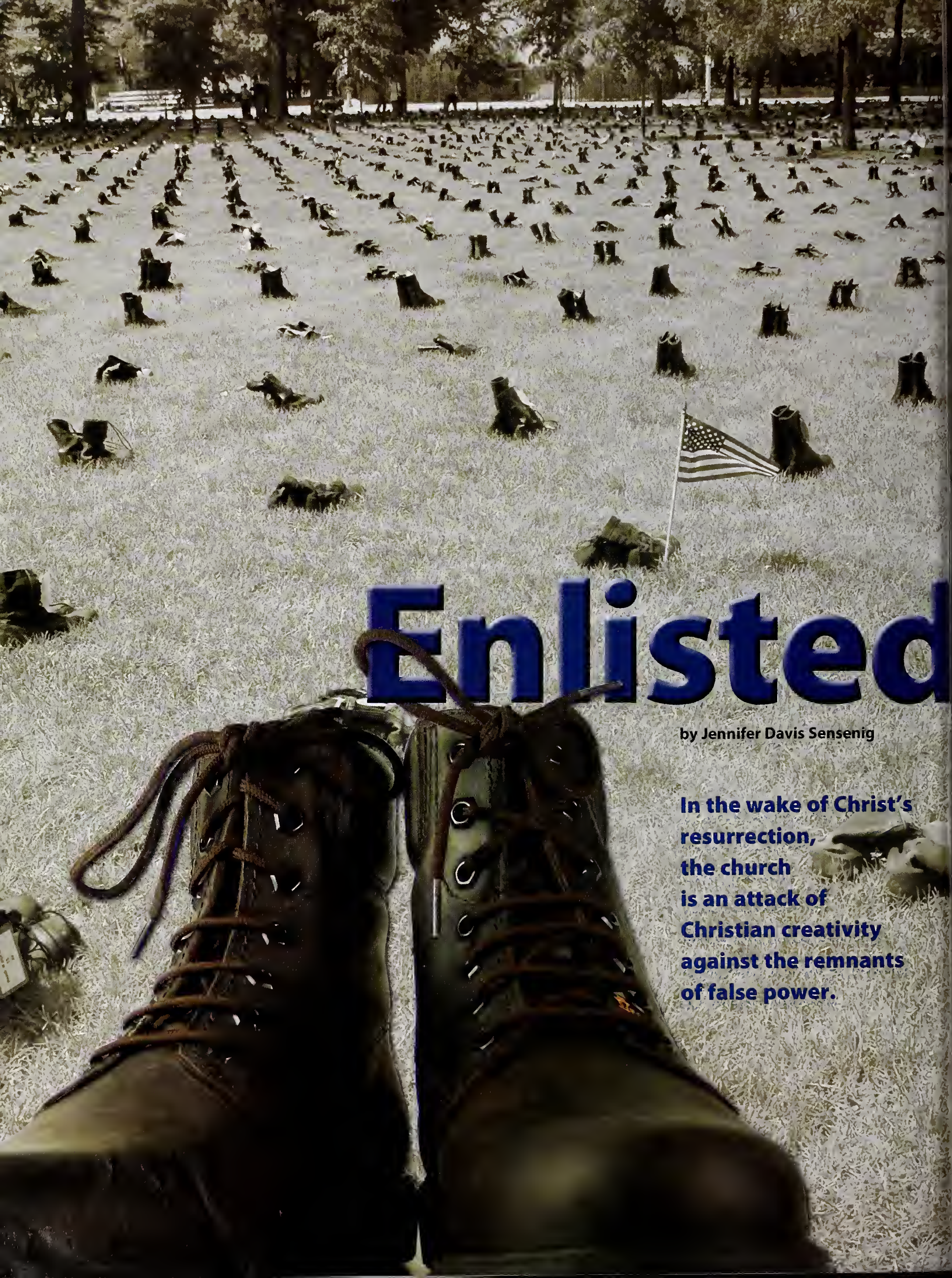
Two photography exhibits are at Hesston (Kan.) College until Nov. 9. The work by Hank and Mary Weaver, Goshen, Ind., focuses on landscapes, architecture and floral photography. Raymond Reid, Shiprock, N.M., specializes in tribal ceremonies.—*Hesston College*

Bethel faculty member receives service award

Violist Kay Buskirk, a Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., adjunct faculty member, has been named the first recipient of the Daniel J. Sevart Community Service Award from the Wichita Symphony Orchestra. She has taught in Bethel's strings program since 2003.—*Bethel College*

Bluffton names Ramseyer Award recipient

Bluffton (Ohio) University recognized Stan and Joenita Clemens of Bluffton Oct. 20 for a lifetime of philanthropic leadership with charitable causes through the Ray Ramseyer Philanthropy Award. —*Bluffton College*



Enlisted

by Jennifer Davis Sensenig

In the wake of Christ's resurrection, the church is an attack of Christian creativity against the remnants of false power.

Associated
Mennonite
Biblical
Seminary

AMBS
window

Fall 2007
Volume 18 Issue 1

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3 **Benefits and challenges of online learning**
Not your traditional seminary courses

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Panorama

The path of God is not always straight

Alan Stucky

When I graduated from Bethel College four years ago I thought I had a plan. I was going to wait in North Newton for a year for my future wife to graduate from college and then we were going to move to Elkhart, Ind., so I could work on my Master of Divinity at AMBS.

As so often happens when God is leading, life took a bit of a detour. So for the last four years I found myself working at Buhler Mennonite Church with a tremendous group of young people and also taking classes at the Great Plains extension of AMBS. Looking back, I can see more clearly the wisdom of God, and would not change my experience for anything.

One of the major reasons that I would not change my experience is that I had the opportunity to take classes with a wonderfully diverse group of people from a variety of stages of life and to take classes through a variety of forms. AMBS offers classes in different forms that have allowed me, and many others, to further my education through multiple settings. Most of my classes have been the somewhat traditional kind that meet on a weekly basis, usually in the evenings. As someone who was working for a church during my study, I found this approach was often helpful because I could have regular contact with the class at a time of the day that actually fit into my schedule.

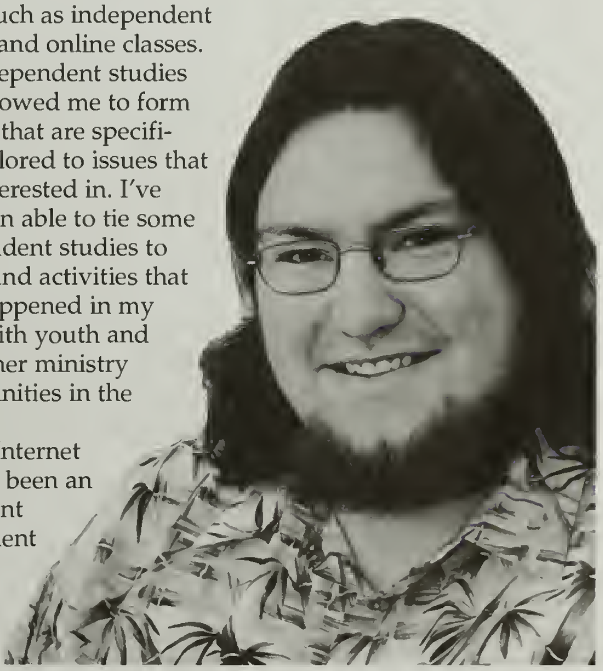
In addition to the weekly classes, each semester I would usually have a class that would meet three or four times for weekends. While these classes were intense, I found them quite rich, partly because of the people who were there. The weekend classes attracted some people who were outside of my geographical area and would otherwise not have been able to attend.

I have also had the opportunity to take classes in more nontraditional forms such as independent studies and online classes. The independent studies have allowed me to form courses that are specifically tailored to issues that I am interested in. I've also been able to tie some independent studies to events and activities that have happened in my work with youth and with other ministry opportunities in the area.

The Internet has also been an important component in many classes. While I have had classes that were entirely online, many of the weekend classes, and some of the weekly classes, have made great use of online discussion forums to expand the discussion beyond the walls of a classroom.

This fall my path of life has finally taken me to the AMBS main campus in Elkhart. I'm looking forward to this atmosphere for new challenges and new opportunities for learning.

Alan Stucky is a student from Buhler, Kansas. He is in the youth ministry concentration of the Master of Divinity degree. ●



Mary E Klassen

Online teaching and learning

Putting good teaching ahead of technology

"Paul was engaged in distance pastoring, using the technology available to him," Jacob Elias, professor of New Testament, said at a recent meeting where AMBS faculty discussed online teaching and learning. This awareness added a helpful dimension to his recent Romans classes as they used today's technology—Internet and e-mail.

While AMBS makes accessible seminary study a strategic goal, faculty work with delivery systems that bring courses closer to people across the continent and even around the world. Online courses are one option—an option that continues raising questions about how well online learning prepares people for ministry.

Gayle Gerber Koontz, professor of theology, took an online course on teaching online courses last summer, and she began the recent faculty discussion emphasizing that pedagogy comes before technology.

Gayle pointed out that good teaching must respect diverse talents and ways of learning, and that "technology permits building multiple pathways to learning."

On the other hand, the questions raised by online courses are significant: Is it possible to build a sense of community among online learners? Can formation for ministry happen online? How can the seminary provide time for faculty to develop online courses, when this requires 50 percent to three times more time than developing a face-to-face course? How can AMBS best provide the technical support needed for students and professors of online courses?

Some students find that online courses give them better opportunities to participate, because they benefit from the additional time to reflect and share comments online if they are not comfortable speaking out in class. The requirement to write comments and reflections can result in deeper learning, AMBS professors have observed.

However, online courses are not better for **all** students, or for all courses and instructors. Some students are not as able to discipline themselves for the independent nature of online learning. Others may not thrive with the high demand for written communication in online discussions. This leads to a higher drop-out rate for online courses.

Another issue important in preparation for ministry is that online courses don't bring students together physically, so the kind of community formed among class members is different. There are ways in which online faculty and students can build community, but it takes more deliberate effort and attention.

Mary Schertz, professor of New Testament, admitted, "It's hard to laugh with your students online."

Because of the tension between the challenge to make courses more accessible and the value of ministry formation in face-to-face learning, AMBS is experimenting with more hybrid courses. These classes meet together two times a semester, with online work in between. (See offerings at right)

Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president, points out on page 4: As AMBS seeks to provide more opportunities for distance learning, we also continue to strengthen on-campus teaching and learning as a base for the other delivery methods. ●

To find out more about AMBS online courses, see www.ambs.edu/academics/courses/online

Gayle Gerber Koontz

Sometimes seminary study involves a truck breakdown in the countryside of Guatemala. The course, Peace and Justice: Latin American Perspectives, took students and AMBS professors Ted and Gayle Gerber Koontz to Guatemala in January 2007. Willi Hugo taught the course at SEMILLA, the Latin American seminary in Guatemala City. This intensive, three-week course is an example of another way in which AMBS offers courses to meet different learning goals. Generally once a year, either in January or summer, AMBS offerings include a course involving encounters with a different culture and country.

Put on the Bible's combat gear to live in a Superpower nation.

In 2004 an art installation at Chicago's Federal Building lined the plaza with 500 pairs of combat boots marking the number of U.S. military deaths in Iraq. This exhibit used combat gear to call the Superpower nation to end the war and make peace. In Ephesians, the combat gear of the first century is used in a similarly artistic way.

The idea of dressing the church for battle comes from the Old Testament. In Isaiah 59, YHWH, the warrior who has defended and saved Israel in the past, also fights against Israel when their society becomes unjust. But in Ephesians, the church is called to "put on the whole armor of God." We might imagine ourselves, individually, taking up these weapons in turn. Yet, more than recommendations for individual believers, these enlistment orders are intended to raise up an "army of one"—one body, who will not be overpowered by the devil. This is not a call to worldly weapons, bloodshed or domination. Rather, in the wake of Christ's resurrection, the church is an attack of Christian creativity against the remnants of false power—the rulers, authorities, powers and forces of evil.

New Testament conversion: We Mennonites are rightly anxious about warfare imagery being misunderstood, but don't go AWOL on me just yet. The good news is that God's battle plan in the New Testament is nothing less than a conversion of these powers. How does Jesus conquer economic injustice? Conversion. Zacchaeus begins the life of discipleship by divesting his wealth. How does Jesus conquer domination of women? Conversion. The woman at the well becomes an agent of the gospel. How does Jesus conquer domination in general? Conversion. The apostles are trained as servants. They are powerful but will not "lord it over" others. How does Jesus conquer racial profiling? Conversion. The Samaritan becomes the model of Christian mercy. How does Jesus conquer poverty? Conversion. The church redistributes wealth so that no one had need. At the end of Jesus' life, how does God conquer violence? Conversion. By Christ's wounds we are healed.

Is it beyond our dreams that the powers of this world can be converted, or taken captive, by the love and saving grace of Jesus Christ? Today, Joseph's story is God's word—the sword of the Spirit—slicing into our national life.

Conversion in a Superpower nation: After Joseph's brothers tossed "this dreamer" into a pit and sold him into slavery, Joseph lived the rest of his life in Egypt. A false accusation led to Joseph spending many years in prison. In contemporary Egypt, prisons are places of abuse and torture. Deaths of prisoners, unfair trials, use of the death penalty and prisoners of conscience arrested for political and religious beliefs or sexual orientation are among the injustices. And Egypt is not the only modern nation beset by these sins.

As if anticipating this and any other nation justifying torture, Scripture's critique of ancient Egypt is unrelenting. The prophet Ezekiel judges and laments Egypt's national direction. Initially, God's anti-Superpower words address the leadership. "I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon sprawling in the midst of its channels, saying, 'My Nile is my own; I made it for myself.' I will put hooks in your jaws. … I will draw you up. … I will fling you into the wilderness" (29:3-5).

> **Our Mennonite schools equip students to live the call with cultural fluency and a Christian mother tongue.**

Battling against the nation, God will fling the enemy into the wilderness. As we know, the wilderness is where a nation either dies or is converted to life with God.

Joseph suffered at the hands of his family and under the domination of a Superpower, but he survived both the pit and Egypt's prison. Released from prison to interpret a dream about fat cows and scrawny cows, Joseph subsequently becomes the prime minister in Pharaoh's administration. From this position Joseph leads a program to reorganize Egypt's economy and mitigate the effects of impending famine. Joseph blesses Egypt, the Superpower nation, with an economic strategy that converts the flow of Egyptian wealth so that in the lean years the hungry can be fed.

This chapter of Joseph's story is like a bell tone in our Mennonite Church USA ears. Our 16th-century Anabaptist ancestors suffered abuse at the hands of older, stronger siblings and the power of the state. We, too, have a memory of the pit and the prison. And like Joseph's later success in Egypt, Mennonites have largely flourished living in this nation.

Joseph also speaks a second language. Today, Mennonites in the United States speak many languages. We are fluent in the languages of restorative justice, medicine, arts, community organizing, agriculture, business, computer technology, pedagogy and therapy, among others. Our Mennonite schools equip students to live the call with cultural fluency and a Christian mother tongue.

Joseph is not a warrior. Could he have been second only to the Pharaoh and not used violence or domination to underwrite his authority? Biblically

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speaking, Joseph's tenure as prime minister is during a peculiar period when Pharaoh was listening to God and the nation was responding to impending disaster by reorganizing its economy. Rather than resorting to weapons of violence, Joseph dons the belt of truth as he stands before Pharaoh.

Knowing that famine was surely coming to devastate land, animals and people, Joseph might have suggested a military campaign to enlarge the territory of Egypt and exploit more resources to protect Egypt's population. But wisely, Joseph's campaign is about sustainability and sharing. Joseph established trade relations with people beyond the boundaries of Egypt through abundance rather than scarcity.

God's creative advance against the nation of Egypt included even "collateral grace." Joseph was reconciled with his family.

In the book of Acts, the wise and Spirit-filled Stephen declares: God "rescued [Joseph] from all his afflictions, and enabled him to win favor and to show wisdom when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt" (7:10). Joseph lived the call in Egypt. Joseph blessed the nation where he lived. Even before the hungry world is fed and the family of faith is reconciled, this brother stands willing to risk the pit or the prison a second time. God's call to us in Joseph and in Ephesians is to stand.

The United States of America needs Mennonite Church USA to live the call.

Live the call: As Mennonite Church USA, our ears ring when we hear Joseph's story because we, too, are living in a Superpower nation facing ecological crisis. Ancient Egypt's crisis was famine. Ours is oil dependence, global climate change, soil degradation, air pollution and deforestation. Like Joseph, we can contribute to wise government in our nation to benefit not only the United States but the rest of the world, particularly the global South, which will be disproportionately affected by these environmental crises and the resulting resource wars.

To the degree that we in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition are still separate from the world, we are all foreigners in the empire. We are neither fully at home in this nation nor completely antagonistic toward its leadership because our leader is Jesus Christ, the Lord whose mission is conversion. Each of us is a living testimony of conversion. And God has enlisted us in an attack of Christian creativity against the remnants of false power.

It is possible to live the call in the United States. When we are enlisted and receive our uniform, the whole armor of God, we are outfitted like Jesus—the divine warrior whose weapons destroyed strongholds by saving, healing, teaching, delivering those captive to demons, loving enemies and even suffering.

Sisters and brothers, we stand as one body in a Superpower nation. We are an army of love, with truth telling as our belt, justice across our chest, wearing sandals of peace, headgear of salvation and packing the Word. This is an unmistakable uniform. We are at Christ's command.

Independence Day: The United States of America needs Mennonite Church USA to live the call. In the whole Christian family we are just one among siblings, but there is wisdom in this church. We have no need to protect the positions or privileges we have. God does not call us to preserve our wealth or our status but to give our lives for others. Soldiering is a sacrificial vocation. The Lord's battle plan does not include self-preservation. Conversion means losing ourselves in order to gain Christ.

On this national holiday, let us claim the cracked Liberty Bell. Its inscription, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Leviticus 25:10), comes from God's Jubilee, which realigns people, land and resources with God's intentions for salvation and peace. Let us set aside our fears and our impulse toward self-preservation. As converts to Jesus Christ who believe that all authorities will ultimately bend to the true power of crucified love, the victory of resurrection is in sight. Getting dressed for the engagement is our sacrament. Christ is risen, and at his word we, too, are raised. Let us affirm our enlistment with Christ. Mennonite Church USA, put on the whole armor of God: the belt of truth, the breastplate of justice, the shoes of peacemaking, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, the word of God.

Jennifer Davis Sensenig is a member of the pastoral staff at Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church. This article is adapted from the sermon she gave July 4 at San José 2007.

Iraq numbers (as of Oct. 30)

U.S. military deaths: 3,839

U.S. military wounded: 28,276

Iraqi civilian deaths: 71,259

Source: www.michaelmoore.com

Farmyard

by Shari Wagner

Tonight, with the volume turned down,
someone is backing a tractor through the dark

and into a barn no one has opened for years.
One light in the milk house. One child

at a window watching the wind. Only
Snowball who has died and come back

with the same name knows I am here.
He straddles his spot near the stoop,

yapping his heart out in absolute silence.
Heat lightning strikes the sky with a match

and the garden grows thick with what draws
spirits down, the incense of tomato leaves

so pungent my grandmother presses them
to my palm. I am falling into the motions

of what haunts this farmyard: the flap
of aprons, rise and plunge of a handle,

turn of a crank, rush of salt, ice, everything
so much like a dance I want to grab hold and join.

One day I will wake up and even the barn
and its dust will be swept into a lawn

with nothing to remember. I scoop
what's been lost beneath the hollyhocks

and hoist it toward the backboard
my uncle made from a sign that still reads

"Marion Mennonite Church," its dim letters
like runes that take shape in the moonlight.

Shari Wagner is a member of
First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis.

Redeeming **the powers, redeeming** ourselves

by Lisa Schirch

It's a long way from my grocery store to West Point Military Academy. But I've come to see my time at both stops as experiments in peacebuilding, as places where I attempt to follow the way of Jesus.

When I taught a course on peacebuilding at West Point Military Academy in 2005, I found their cadets are a lot like my undergraduate students at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. They are hardworking, responsible, smart, optimistic, interested in foreign travel, motivated to serve others and ready to make sacrifices. And when I stood at the airport in long wet goodbyes with my family as I departed to travel to Iraq to work with Mennonite

Peace building experiments at West Point and the grocery store

Central Committee (MCC) in 2005, I imagined many military personnel similarly embracing their families as they departed for Iraq that hot August day. I've learned that entering into conversations and relationships with military personnel isn't the same as being co-opted or agreeing with them.

State Department staff George Kennan once noted that the United States is 6 percent of the world's population and owns half the world's wealth. He claimed that maintaining this disparity of consumption—this "American way of life"—required U.S. military power and presence around the world. U.S. Mennonites live in a country that depends on military power to protect our freedom to consume a disproportionate amount of the world's resources.

Many of us pray and sing songs on Sunday about peace and ending the war in Iraq. Yet many of us seem to have all but abandoned the historic commitment to simple living and have instead embraced mainstream consumerism. Our consumer-based lifestyle is supported by a variety of public policies governing trade relations with other countries supplying cheap goods and military policies defending U.S. economic interests and cheap oil abroad. What we buy at the grocery store has an impact on our global neighbors and, in turn, U.S. security.

How can we better redeem the powers of state and military and redeem ourselves from our own consumer-based lifestyles?

The quiet in the land: regaining our voice

Mennonite aversion to talking with government personnel may have more to do with our history than our theological convictions. Early Mennonites were fiery preachers openly defying the powers. They were activists, publicly opposing the government's control over religious matters and proclaiming a new vision for the Christian faith and church-state relations. They were anything but quiet and passive. Within a few decades, persecution and repression wrought so many traumas on early Mennonites that they retreated from open relationships with the state. They became the "quiet in the land," and most remain so to this day.

Trauma expert Carolyn Yoder writes that the collective historic trauma experienced by Mennonites is reflected in our retreat from state and public life, a focus on an inner life, individual salvation and community harmony. For much of our first century in North America, we set ourselves apart from the wastefulness of secular society with a commitment to "simple living."

Today, many Mennonites exhibit a profound skepticism that transformation of the U.S. government is possible. They worry that building relationships with people in state institutions is more likely to lead to co-optation or undercut Mennonite pacifist consistency than it is to lead to the transformation of these systems. Some Mennonites in the southern hemisphere claim this "theology of despair" is a luxury in a world where impoverished people find ways of hoping and working for social and political change.

U.S. Mennonites live in a country that depends on military power to protect our freedom to consume a disproportionate amount of the world's resources.

Yet this reluctance to engage the state seems in contradiction to the Mennonite theological emphasis on reconciling with enemies and Mennonite peacebuilding experiences in the practice of building relationships across the lines of conflict. Jesus teaches us: "I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). Can we slither like snakes amid U.S. policymakers while we strive to live more innocently, with greater respect for our global neighbors and God's creation?

To slither and fly: experiments in redemption

How should Mennonites respond to the urgent calls from government and military actors for alternatives to the devastation in Iraq as policymakers lose their faith in firepower as a solution to terrorism?

A growing percentage of my time is spent talking with military personnel and policymakers, offering them real examples of grass-roots efforts at preventing violence and building peace and security. Mennonites have an opportunity to interact with the U.S. government, not just in ethical opposition to its policies but in providing new security models. Mennonite peacebuilding efforts in community development, reconciliation, dialogue and victim-offender mediation began as theological experiments in putting faith into practice. Mennonites have a lot to say about effective security strategies, given MCC's work around the world. These programs prevent violence and build security from the ground up.

I wake up at 4 a.m. once a week to drive out of

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Mennonites have an opportunity to interact with the U.S. government, not just in ethical opposition to its policies but in providing new security models.

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the tranquil Shenandoah Valley and into Washington to visit members of Congress, the National Defense University or work with foreign policy advocacy groups. My drives begin with NPR stories recounting the day's body count in Iraq, the devastation wrought by climate change's droughts and floods, and stories of crime and corruption. Then I turn off the radio, watch the sun rise over the Blue Ridge Mountains, ask God for guidance in the meetings ahead and listen for direction. God's strategy for security requires us to invest in sustainable development and robust diplomacy to address the root causes of today's problems.

At a meeting of the Department of Defense, State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development, I was introduced as an expert on conflict analysis from Eastern Mennonite University (EMU). Noticing I was the only unclassified person in the room, someone chided aloud: "What! Are the Mennonites the only ones talking to us now?" I'm there as a pragmatic pacifist; I give voice to effective nonviolent solutions rather than just critiquing the powers for their reliance on violence.

Fostering greater awareness of how our consumption patterns impact others can bring us into redemptive relationships with God, the Earth and our global neighbors.

I watch attentively as they argue with each other about Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia. The powers are not monolithic. Half the crowd earnestly speaks the language of human rights, democracy, economic development. The other half clings to their faith in firepower. I'm optimistic; prophetic voices from within the military are calling for a shift in the way the United States engages the world—toward greater diplomatic engagement and sustainable development assistance. We can be secure, or we can continue the consumptive American way of life. We can't have both in a world of haves and have-nots when U.S. companies have sold guns and bombs to the have-nots for decades.

I pray to slither and fly in these Washington meetings. At best, I hope I'm helping policymakers understand the complex dynamics of violence and the impossible fantasy of quick victory with firepower. At the very least, I hope I'm able to inch U.S. policies and the behavior of U.S. troops toward engaging in less lethal and more respectful ways with people in other countries. At worst, I'm just making the possibility of another Iraq easier. A community of theologians and colleagues at EMU counsel and hold me accountable as I assess the impact of my work.

These are some of my experiments in redeeming the powers. Redeeming myself, an addicted consumer to a North American lifestyle supported by these powers, requires some peacebuilding experiments that take place closer to home.

Simple living: a personal foreign policy

Militarism and consumption are related addictions. While Mennonites articulate a belief in pacifism that rejects violence, we have a more difficult time discussing the contradictions of how we benefit from cheap oil and other foreign resources yet reject the wars that, at least in part, help defend the access to and freedom to engage in a consumer-based lifestyle. Perhaps Mennonites are more like ostriches with heads in the sand—or chickens in a well-guarded cage—than peace-loving doves.

I'd like to see Mennonite churches place more emphasis on simple living as a vital element of global security. We need community programs to help us live more simply and in greater harmony with the rest of the world. Personal decisions we make at grocery and clothing stores impact others and the environment. Fostering greater awareness of how our consumption patterns impact others can bring us into redemptive relationships with God, the Earth and our global neighbors. We can experiment in building peace and increasing security by buying fair-trade products, those made closer to home or renewing a passion for living more with less. Choosing what we eat and wear are foreign policy decisions.

In promoting Mennonite simple living and peacebuilding practices as tools for global security, perhaps we'll find the redemption possible in reconciled relationships with the state. And maybe we can redefine what it means to be the quiet in the land, for peacebuilding is almost always best done in quiet ways, gently building relationships and letting others take the credit.

Lisa Schirch is a professor of peacebuilding and program director of the 3D Security Initiative (www.3Dsecurity.org) at the Center for Justice & Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University. She is a member of Shalom Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va.

From preservation to engagement

by Stanley W. Green

Together, sharing all of Christ
with all of creation

When Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz and George Blaurock baptized each other on Jan. 21, 1525, the Anabaptist movement was born.

The movement was born with a strong missional consciousness. Convinced from their study of Bible that a relationship with Jesus Christ not mediated by sacraments or ecclesiastical orders was vital, these early Anabaptists were excited to share this good news with their neighbors.

Since that beginning, the Anabaptist movement has experienced three phases before entering upon its current phase.

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An Anabaptist missional journey in 4 phases

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Phase 1: courageous witness—the glimpse of a missional church

The initial phase was one of rapid growth spurred by the fervent, unflinching witness, which was met by brutal repression. In an effort to silence the witness of these earnest believers who claimed allegiance to Christ before civil or state authorities, these authorities killed thousands of Anabaptist believers, beginning with the martyrdom by Protestants under Zwingli. Felix Manz became the first martyr in 1527.

Martyrs Mirror describes the persecution and execution of thousands of Anabaptists in the Low Countries (plus Germany, Switzerland, Austria and elsewhere) between 1524 and 1660 who refused to be silent about their faith.

Living almost five centuries ago, these people typified the Radical Reformation, which questioned human tradition that had propped up the state church for centuries. They refused to defend themselves with political or military power, and their influence spread even under persecution. Perhaps a 10th of the inhabitants of the Low Countries (now Holland and Belgium) came to believe as Anabaptists did, despite mass tortures and executions. After the Inquisition by Spanish rulers in the later 16th century, the executions and tortures stopped, bringing to an end Phase 1.

The Anabaptists refused to defend themselves with political or military power, and their influence spread even under persecution.

MC USA Archives-North Newton

Phase 2: migration from engagement to quiescence—the martyrs become the 'quiet in the land,' a movement becomes a culture

During this second phase, those whose voices could not be silenced became known almost affectionately as those who just want to be left alone to do their own thing. After the Inquisition, persecution continued in Europe, causing some of the most earnest followers of the Anabaptist dream to emigrate to North America in the 18th and 19th centuries.

It also led to a period of quiescence. This period brought a shift from the zealous missional fervor of bearing witness to Jesus to yearning for preservation. The focus shifted from courageous witness to securing space for the community to practice its beliefs and deepening traditions in peace. Desiring only to be left alone, Mennonites became known by the cute moniker, "the quiet in the land." During this period, Mennonites who had formerly been known for troublemaking became known by their last names. A vibrant religious movement changed into an ethnic identity.

Phase 3: from insular communities to cross-cultural engagement—becoming a missionary people

The migrants to North America settled mostly in rural communities or on the edge of cities, where they could practice their faith undisturbed. It was not until the mid-19th century that the impact of the missionary zeal of Protestant and evangelical churches influenced Mennonite communities. During this time, mission to Native Americans, to cities and African American mission churches began. By the end of the century, this missionary energy expanded to include "foreign" missions, starting in India. The new Mennonite heroes and heroines were those who volunteered to serve across the oceans in far-off lands. Disproportionate to their small numbers, Mennonites made an enormous investment in mission that saw churches planted in more than 60 countries on six continents. In the process, a north-Atlantic peoplehood (of Russian, Dutch, Swiss and German ethnicities) was transformed into a global family.

Phase 4: recovering our roots—becoming a missional people

While there was an unparalleled outpouring of missionary zeal during the 20th century, missionaries were heroic individuals who crossed the oceans or who went to the "reservations" and mission churches among African Americans in the cities. Mission meant relocation and encounter with people of other-than-European ancestry.

The end of the 20th century brought Mennonites, through a merger to a place of imagining a preferred (faithful) future. The last half-decade of the 20th century was a time of new possibilities for North American Mennonites. Who would we become as we responded to the opportunity to reshape the church and our identity? These communities, comprised mainly of Dutch-Russian (General Conference Mennonite Church) and Swiss-German (Mennonite Church), were moving in the direction of a generic, white North American identity accommodated to the influences of Christendom. But a new Mennonite Church (Canada and USA) committed itself to a missional future, beginning the journey of "finding a usable future in our past." Almost five years into that journey now, here are some of our learnings:

1. It is important to define a clear vision.

When we gathered in Nashville, Tenn., in July 2001, and voted to become one new church, many controversies—polity, theological conviction, perceptions and stereotypes—threatened to fracture the church even before it was born. Critical to how people voted was the question, What would be the driving force that would shape the identity of this

We learned to talk about God's mission, to observe what God was doing in the world and seek to align ourselves with God's purposes rather than our carefully crafted plans.

new church? The threat of competing or disparate visions was averted when the church agreed that becoming a missional people was the most compelling vision to undergird the new church. That became the vision for our church.

2. Language is important.

We discovered early the importance of how we talked about this vision and the transformation required to become a missional people. We learned that how we talk about God, mission and the church is critical and shapes how we act. We were used to talking about our obligation in mission, what we needed to do for the mission to be accomplished. We learned instead to talk about God's mission, to observe what God was doing in the world and seek to align ourselves with God's purposes rather than our carefully crafted plans. Mission was not something one part of the denomination did for or on behalf of the church. Mission was the essence and lifeblood of every congregation. Missionaries were not heroic individuals employed by the mission agency who were consecrated to cross the oceans. Every participant in each congregation was to be equipped to cross the boundaries in their context, which is a mission location, to share the good news about Jesus.

3. The missional journey is fundamentally a spiritual engagement.

The journey is about an engagement that transforms, not merely about acquiring new skills. The journey's success is predicated on the renewal or conversion each believer must undergo. To this end, the introduction of the missional church vision to delegates came with a set of six spiritual exercises called habits of a missional church.

4. The success of the journey depends on building a broad coalition and alliance of stakeholders to ensure maximum ownership of the vision.

Once the church embraced the vision, we needed to develop a broad coalition of implementers so people did not think the vision belonged only to a segment of the church or that some parts of the church were marginal to or unimportant in the realization of the vision. In August 2001, a team formed that included seminaries, agencies, area conferences, congregations, multicultural ministry representatives and denominational executive leaders. Every part of the church had primary responsibility to make the vision a reality.

5. This journey should anticipate and positively engage conflict so that it has a transformative potential.

During a time of change, various entities in the church may try to co-opt the agenda and control the distribution of resources. This was a time of heightened anxiety and major conflict. The commitment to a common vision helped prevent a conflict that might have proven unmanageable.

6. We learned the importance of framing the missional journey in terms of identity and essence rather than a project to be engaged.

It was important for us to describe this vision not in terms of new techniques or strategies but in terms of the essence of the church's identity and our heritage as Mennonites who seek to be faithful followers of Jesus.

7. Listening is imperative to contextualize the vision.

Meetings of the Missional Church Team (which gave leadership to sharing the vision and its implementation) were held in various parts of the constituency, and this allowed us to listen to the ways people were thinking about the missional vision and how they were practicing their growing missional consciousness and commitments. This allowed the vision to be contextualized rather than using a cookie-cutter approach.

8. Communication of the vision requires multiple uses of image, media and story to offer the possibility for people to creatively engage in transformative possibilities.

Given our diversity (age, cultural, urban, rural) we needed a variety of images, media and story to communicate the vision. We developed drama, video, stories and interactive engagements to help reinforce people's understanding of the vision and describe its practical implementation.

9. Local leadership (pastors) in the grass-roots implementation of the vision is important.

From the outset, we recognized that the primary advocates for the vision needed to be pastors and congregational leaders. We worked carefully to encourage, invite and empower pastors to advance and implement the vision.

It's been six years since we first set out in pursuit of this vision, but the journey has only begun. North Americans have a short attention span, and this process will require more than shifting furniture. It requires radical transformation, even for a people whose roots were a powerful missional movement. If this vision is to be fully realized, there remain yet great challenges ahead, but the promise is so tantalizing that we dare not lose heart.

Stanley W. Green is executive director of Mennonite Mission Network.

If this vision is to be fully realized, there remain yet great challenges ahead, but the promise is so tantalizing that we dare not lose heart.

Move beyond prayer to stop the war

Scott Key teaches at Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University. He and his family are members of Mennonite Community Church in Fresno.

In his June 19 editorial, Everett J. Thomas pointed out how Mennonites support war and concluded, "There seems to be nothing we can do but write letters and pray that [the war in Iraq] will stop." Prayer is mysterious and powerful. God calls us to pray for peace and justice. Prayer changes things, especially ourselves as we see the world differently and are moved to outrage and action.

How can we stop war—other than by not joining the military?

My family—Lorie, Rachel (age 11) and Joshua (age 8½) and I—asked this question. We were (and still are) angry and frustrated. We decided to act. Lorie joined the board of Peace Fresno. As a family, we have added our voices to large-scale (at least by Fresno standards) protests and marches. We join a few others at the peace corner, holding signs such as, "Who would Jesus kill?" and "Peace: A Way of Life," for hundreds of cars driving by. Yet, month after month, the war policy has not changed. We have come to realize that war needs money and personnel. If you take these away, war is a difficult venture. I am cochair of the Central Valley Counter-Recruitment Coalition. As our family continues to struggle with what to do, here are some of our suggestions:

Work against war

1. *Do not support the war machine.* Ah, but this is complicated. As Thomas pointed out, our economy revolves around the military-industrial complex, with thousands of direct jobs and tens of thousands of indirect jobs tied to the war machine. The elimination of war would lead to the loss of good jobs, which would trickle down into most communities, causing a tsunami of economic hardship and pain. The restructuring of our economy is a long-term project. It would be difficult for us to extricate ourselves from the economy. But there are beginning steps: Do not work for a company directly tied to the tools of war; do not buy products from companies with direct ties to war; do not invest in companies with direct ties to war.

2. *Do not pay for war.* If you are self-employed, choose to withhold the portion of your taxes used for war. This is risky, as you will be labeled a war-tax resistor, and the federal government can seize property. Like many Mennonites, I do not have this choice because my employer automatically withholds federal taxes. But you can still ensure that the least amount of tax is withheld and thereby stop the government from using your money interest free. All of us can visit our members of Congress to push for the passage of the Peace Tax Fund (www.peacetaxfund.org). Lorie has discovered that our representative needs more than one visit but she sees this as part of her peace witness.

3. *Reduce military recruitment.* With a budget approaching $4 billion, the Pentagon has ratcheted up its recruitment efforts. Slick ads peak interest, but the "selling" of the military is entrusted to thousands of military recruiters who entice students to enlist with promises of money for college, job training, travel and adventure. Recruiters are swarming high schools, shopping malls, community events, wherever young people gather. To protect young people and stop war, become involved in counter-recruitment, helping young people opt out of releasing their contact information to military recruiters and learn about alternatives to military service. The work is challenging but rewarding (see www.fres-no-war.com).

Work for peace

1. *Bring peace education into the schools.* While it will take many years for the core curriculum to change, it is possible to add peace curriculum. Talk with teachers and administrators. Ask them to bring in guest speakers and add units from a peace perspective. The focus of speakers and curriculum can be anti-war, conflict resolution, social justice and many more. It is crucial to find allies on school campuses such as teachers, counselors and administrators.

2. *Change school environments.* Help local schools adopt restorative discipline programs. These programs serve as the foundation for students to consider alternative approaches to conflict resolution. Help students create peace clubs. While student clubs need a faculty sponsor, students still connect with their classmates better. Student clubs can invite guest speakers, handout materials and sponsor special events.

While prayer is crucial, it should lead to action. Jesus used prayer to energize for action. Jesus called his followers to action. Will our actions stop war? If all Mennonites acted for peace, there would be change at the local level and, hopefully, over time, in our society. I invite you to join our family as we struggle and work for peace. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **My encounter with Ken**—Cindy Miller
- **O the places you will go**—Jim S. Amstutz

CLC sees unequal racial, gender balance

Constituency Leaders Council discusses ways to better represent congregations.

The Constituency Leaders Council (CLC), which met in Colorado Springs Oct. 15-17, showed concern for its gender and racial/ethnic makeup by dividing into three separate table groupings: racial/ethnic people, Anglo women and Anglo men.

Leaders said this table division served several purposes—one being to literally see the overwhelming majority of Anglo men present, another being to have discussions in affinity groups.

This meeting fell at an all-time low with the percentage of women: 80 percent men and 20 percent women attended. The highest was in October of 2005, with 62 percent men and 38 percent women. Most churchwide agencies seek a 50-50 ratio.

"When more than half the people in congregations are women, and God calls both men and women, can we make space to hear women's voices?" asked Gay Brunt Miller, CLC vice chair, at the end of sharing her personal story to CLC.

Ron Byler, associate executive director, said, "CLC is not a representative group ... we want leaders of conferences here." He added that CLC "works well" because conferences decide who to send; however, it would "work even better" if the conferences' leaders reflected the gender makeup of its members.

At the table feedback time, one table reporter asked that CLC intentionally balance gender makeup by recommending that conferences send women as at least one of the three representatives. The reporter also encouraged addressing systemic issues related to women, such as the theology of women in leadership, family and practices, as well as requesting child care at CLC meetings.

Antiracism discernment process

The percentages of racial/ethnic representatives were also provided. This meeting was 82 percent Anglo and 18 percent racial/ethnic people. The average for CLC meetings is 87 percent Anglo and 13 percent racial/ethnic people.

Iris de León-Hartshorn, director of Intercultural Relations for Executive Leadership, reviewed the process and findings of the antiracism discernment process of CLC. Earlier in the gender discussion, she said that "women of color are invisible in settings like CLC but are the ones that do the work in their churches." She said both systemic and relational approaches are needed in this process and recommends prioritizing trauma healing options for people hurt by the church. After discussion, CLC passed a proposal to affirm the appointment of a small group from within CLC to make recommendations for specific systemic tasks by CLC to make progress on the antiracism goals of the denomination and CLC. The proposal stated: "The primary focus will be on actions that the CLC can take, but the group will also look at the entire churchwide system. In its work, the group will address the hurt and isolation experienced by many of our racial/ethnic brothers and sisters and try to identify ways for the broader church to understand the fullness of that experience and the part the church community has played in it."

Resolution on National Identity

CLC reviewed the resolution on National Identity brought to the delegates at San José 2007, to which the Executive Board will respond.

Dorothy Nickel Friesen, conference minister of Western District, asked that the 2009 churchwide convention theme be "identity." She also recommended that Conrad Kanagy's profile of Mennonite Church USA be used and that *The Mennonite* run a column on Mennonite identity in North America in each issue.

Chuck Goertz, moderator of Southeast Mennonite Conference, recommended that we drop the name Mennonite to begin a "raging conversation of who we really are."

> **Women of color are invisible in settings like CLC but are the ones that do the work in their churches.**
> **—Iris de León-Hartshorn**

Health-care access

Keith Harder, project director for the health-care access for church workers initiative, brought a proposal from the initiative's reference group. Harder said the health-care access reference group proposes a "shared risk" model to fund a health-care plan for all eligible congregational church workers rather than a market plan that will generate funds to cover uninsured pastors. Churchwide agency participation is needed, he added.

Conference structuring

The tables discussed "God's dreams" for Mennonite Church USA's conference structuring. One table said conferences offer important diversity and relationships. Another table wondered if the current model is still valid and recommended a model of six or seven regional conferences with church clusters. With about 60 percent of conference ministers retiring in the coming decade, this is an "opportune time for new structures," said the table reporter. The reporter also said young adults seem to have less invested in current structure. Another table reporter said, "Geography matters; conferences that overlap definitely know this."
—Anna Groff

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

Students learn theology in butchering

Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center and AMBS partner for course.

Luke Gascho

Conference participants of "Sacred Soil: Reclaiming the Source of Our Food," at Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center, Goshen, Ind., butcher chickens during a workshop.

A group of adults of mixed ages knelt around a heap of dirt dug from a pit two feet deep in a former farm field. They examined the heavy clay soil, squeezing fistfuls to see if it would form clumps in their hands. Earlier they had paced the length of several parcels of land: the square footage needed to feed one person a subsistence diet, a vegetarian diet and a typical American diet for one year.

This was not your typical seminary class. Nevertheless, a number of those learning about soil horizons were students from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Ind., participating in the experience at the Sept. 28-30 conference at Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center of Goshen (Ind.) College for credit. They had signed up for a course "Sacred Soil: Reflections in Ecological Theology, Ethics and Spirituality," offered through a new partnership between Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Merry Lea, a nature preserve near Wolf Lake, Ind. They were attending the Autumn Hope Conference, with this year's theme, "Sacred Soil: Reclaiming the Source of Our Food."

We need to understand that God has a relationship with all of creation and not just with human beings. —Luke Gascho

For several years, Merry Lea has offered an Autumn Hope Conference, which blends ecosystem experiences outdoors with theological reflection, but this year is the first time future pastors could earn academic credit for attending, though over half the conference participants were not seminary students.

The sacred soil course was originally designed by Karla Stoltzfus, AMBS graduate. Ted Koontz, professor of ethics and peace studies at AMBS, and Luke Gascho, Merry Lea's executive director, teach the course.

"It is critical for pastoral leadership to learn how to look at the earth and to understand that there are connections for us theologically," Gascho says. "Most of the formal training that happens for church leaders doesn't include the spirituality and ethics of creation care. We need to understand that God has a relationship with all of creation and not just with human beings."

Jeffrey Hawkins, a pastor and keynote speaker for the weekend conference, operates a family farm in North Manchester, Ind., where he also mentors other pastors through an organization called Hands-On Pastoral Education using Clergy Sustaining Agriculture.

Hawkins says that when he began farming while serving as a pastor, learning to tend his crops and livestock with the seasonal rhythms and uncertainties that go with farming also taught him to better serve his congregation.

An experience that just wouldn't work in a classroom was the butchering workshop, offered as a breakout session during the conference.

In an experience that combined wielding an axe and meditative readings, participants helped butcher the chickens they would eat for Sunday dinner.

"In no way did I want to be present for the butchering," participant Peg Zeis of Fremont, Ind., said. "Yet I do eat meat, and I felt that I had to be there."

Larry Yoder, a retired former director and assistant director of Merry Lea, led the reflective portion of the butchering workshop.

"What have you killed before?" he asked the group.

Discussions ranged from Genesis to Psalms, from Native American approaches to the killing of animals to Old Testament requirements for processing meat.—*Jennifer Schrock for Goshen College*

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Prayer labyrinth dedicated at EMU

Lilly Endowment, Inc. funded the new labyrinth, which contains 966 stones.

The dream of building a prayer labyrinth on the campus of Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), Harrisonburg, Va., began 15 years ago with Wendy Miller, professor of spiritual formation at Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS).

On Oct. 13, that dream came true as Miller and others dedicated the prayer labyrinth on the hill northwest of the seminary building.

"Building the labyrinth was a bit like a labyrinth itself," Miller said at the dedication ceremony. "There were all kinds of twists and turns. Even though we knew we were moving forward, it was not always obvious that we were moving toward the center."

From the dream, spawned by Miller and some seminary students, others got excited about the idea.

Brian Martin Burkholder, campus pastor at EMU, was in the group that made decisions about the funds offered to EMU by the Lilly Endowment, Inc. in a grant called "the theological exploration of vocation."

"I was aware that often grant money goes into programs that are initiated while the grant is in effect and then later dropped, and I wanted something lasting to come out of this," he said. The Lilly grant funded the labyrinth.

Linda Alley, director of the congregational resource center at EMS and a student, did a project on labyrinths for a spiritual formation course.

She found the Santa Rosa, a copyrighted design by Lea Goode-Harris, that combines the design of the labyrinth in the floor of the Chartes cathedral with more ancient designs.

Alley and her spouse, Robert, had started to build a labyrinth in that design on their property in Harrisonburg and suggested that EMU use the same design.

Construction began on the project the summer of 2005. Kirk Shank Zehr of Harrisonburg, a former EMS student, was contacted to do the stone masonry, both laying the stone path in the labyrinth itself and building a retaining wall around it.

"We wanted to make it clear that this was a labyrinth in the Christian tradition, so in the center I created a cross out of red stones, which are quite rare," said Zehr. The labyrinth itself contains 996 stones.

The retaining wall is a dry-laid stone wall, created without mortar, by carefully cutting and piecing stones together and was a gift from the seminary class of 2006 and several other donors.—*Laura Lehman Amstutz of Eastern Mennonite Seminary*

Laura Lehman Amstutz

From left to right: Kirk Shank Zehr, stone mason; Linda Alley, seminary student, and Kevin Clark, seminary campus pastor, walk the labyrinth prior to the dedication ceremony Oct. 13.

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Mennonites and Catholics seek healing

Conference responds to the 'Called Together to Be Peacemakers' report.

James Jakob Fehr

German Catholic Bishop Hans-Joachim Jaschke , left, and Bernhard Thiessen, pastor of the Mennonite church in Hamburg-Altona, at the close of the ecumenical worship service on Sept. 21.

> The healing of memories must take place at the congregational level; otherwise the whole church suffers.
> —Fernando Enns

German Catholics and Mennonites assembled in Hamburg, Germany, Sept. 21-22 for a conference on "Healing of Memories."

The conference was a joint response of the Association of Mennonite Congregations in Germany (AMG) and the Roman Catholic German Bishops Conference to the official report, "Called Together to Be Peacemakers," on the 1998 to 2003 dialogue between representatives of Mennonite World Conference and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

Fernando Enns, Mennonite director of the Institute for Theology of the Peace Churches at Hamburg University, emphasized that it is the call of the gospel, not merely curiosity or subjective interest, that leads us to listen to one another. The healing of memories must take place at the congregational level; otherwise the whole church suffers, he said.

John Radano from the Pontifical Council said that we need to state differences openly, overcome conflicts and work toward unity "so that the world may believe." Reconciliation with God includes reconciliation with each other, and this common spirit makes it possible for us to work together for peace, an essential component for unity among Christians, he added.

Andrea Lange, Mennonite member of the international Mennonite-Catholic dialogue, spoke candidly about her initial reservations: Was the invitation of the Vatican an attempt to get Mennonites to return to the Roman Catholic fold? She said she remains skeptical about the Catholic notion of the Eucharist as a sacrament, in strong contrast to the Mennonite concept and practice of the Lord's supper, yet she sees engaging in a fearless examination of sacramental theology as desirable.

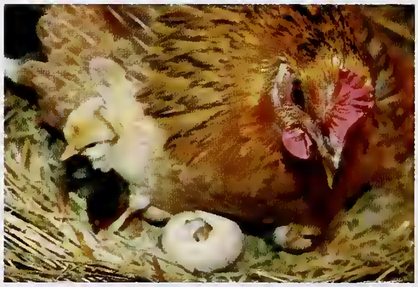
Lange also spoke of the importance of talking about what we mean by "making peace," including love of our enemies. As disciples of Jesus, Christians must reject every form of institutionalized violence, she said.

Wolfgang Thönissen from the Institute for Ecumenical Studies in Paderborn spoke on the need for a visible unity of the church. Although Catholics still hold to the practice of baptizing infants and making them church members, they also wish to claim that faith and baptism are equally important and that the church is understood to be the community of "resolute believers." Respect for the faith of other religious communities has also grown, he said.

Fernando Enns endorsed the step from "considering theology together" to "doing theology together." The Catholic Church begins theological discussion with Holy Scripture, tradition and the church's doctrinal authority, whereas Mennonites focus on examining and correcting life and practice in the light of Scripture, he said.

On Sept. 21, an ecumenical service was held in the Mennonite Church in Hamburg-Altona. Hans-Joachim Jaschke, who represented the German Council of Bishops, preached on a passage frequently cited as a favorite of Menno Simons: "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).

A delegation of Mennonites from 10 countries will participate in a church-to-church visit to Rome Oct. 18-23, hosted by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The delegation will meet briefly with Pope Benedict—*From a report by Oskar Wedel for Die Brücke, translated by James Jakob Fehr*



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Language offers connections in China

For Mennonite Partners in China, teaching and learning goes hand in hand.

Sichuan Province is a good place to avoid in August, with its heavy rains, hot weather and humidity. But for Mennonite Partners in China (MPC) teachers, the summer routine is set: it's all about language.

After several weeks of volunteer teaching or hosting families, MPC teachers come together for a month of Chinese language study, workshops, cultural learning and worship. When they finish, some of those teachers return to teach English to Chinese students.

This summer, a group from Virginia Mennonite Missions also took part in the learning process, joining English classes at a Nanchong church.

"The more language I know, the more connections with people I can make. Just a little bit of language melts walls of strangeness and suspicion," says Phil Bender, who serves with Julie, his wife, through Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network.

Todd Hanson, with Mennonite Partners through Witness and Mission Network, says he heard a student describe her role less as a language learner than as a peace builder: "I build peace when I learn a language because my role then becomes one of building bridges between two peoples and two cultures," she said.

The motivation for studying varies from student to student, but commitment to learn this challenging language is strong, both among Chinese students and the Mennonite Partners teachers.

The five Virginia Mennonite Missions teachers from Harrisonburg, Va., joined the Nanchong Christian congregation's summer English school, held for the first time in the new Nanchong church facility. Ninety students in five classes studied for two weeks with native English speakers.

The Nanchong congregation has organized summer English classes for the last five years, and Mennonite teachers have taught in most of these.

Todd Hanson

From left, David Yuan and Todd, Claire, Kate and Jeanette Hanson take a break from language teaching and study.

Pastor Wang Guanghui of the Nanchong church, says, "These summer classes have greatly increased the visibility of the church and have begun to change people's attitudes in the neighborhood. They see us concerned about education and their children and not just meeting the needs of our own congregation."

Children and grandchildren of congregation members, as well as friends, neighbors and those who hear about it through word of mouth may attend. Because the church is not a registered school, it cannot advertise for students. But since it uses volunteer teachers, students whose families could only dream about the expensive summer classes offered at schools and universities can learn from native English speakers.

MPC teachers work in Chinese higher education institutions while their Chinese counterparts have a chance to spend a semester at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.

Just a little bit of language melts walls of strangeness and suspicion. —Phil Bender

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Sara Wenger Shenk
associate dean of the seminary

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CALENDAR

The second ***CrossRoads (Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center) lecture***. Nov. 10, 4 p.m., at **Garbers Church of the Brethren**, 1275 Garbers Church Road, Harrisonburg, Va. Donations accepted; 540-438-1275.

Annual ***CrossRoads house tour*** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Nov. 17. The tour will feature three historic homes and a church in **eastern Rockingham County, Va.**, preserved by Brethren and Mennonite families. Contact 540-438-1275 for information.

WORKERS

McCrae, Betsy Headrick, was licensed and installed as pastor at Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood, Colo., on Sept. 23.

Miller, Rachel Ringenberg, was licensed as associate pastor at Portland Mennonite Church, Portland, Ore., on Oct. 14.

Rhodes, Glen, was ordained as pastor at Arthur Mennonite Church, Arthur, Ill, on Sept., 30.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

DeCubellis, Alyssa Rane, Sept. 28, to Philip and Angela Peters DeCubellis, Mount Joy, Pa.

Dyck, Henry Martin Troyer, Oct. 16, to Jeff Dyck and Lara Troyer, Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

Frey, Lydia Grace, Oct. 11, to Kevin and Lindsay Stoller Frey, Archbold, Ohio.

Hoober, Reid Aaron, Sept. 11, to Brent and Carmen Bontrager Hoober, Elkhart, Ind.

Landes, Cooper, Sept. 11, to Philip and Jana Bennett Landes, Bridgewater, Va.

Lehman, Myah Joy Wenger, Oct. 1, to Lance and Krista Wenger Lehman, Kidron, Ohio.

Litwiller, Bridget Caroline, Oct. 6, to Matt and Lisa Kraybill Litwiller, Goshen, Ind.

Martin, Anja Lynn, Sept. 30, to Andrew and Lydia Underwood Martin, Goshen, Ind.

Mellinger, Tobias "Toby" Kenton, Sept. 26, to Kris and Amy Leatherman Mellinger, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Merritt, Carson Daniel, Aug. 25, to Dann and Becky Merritt, Newport, Wash.

Milanese, Joseph Anthony, Oct. 4, to Dan and Lisa Sauder Milanese, Ind.

Milner, Joseph Clifton, Oct. 4, to Clifton Milner and Jessica Graber, New Orleans, La.

Morris, Carter Travis, Oct. 2, to Travis and Heather Myers Morris, Souderton, Pa.

Nuss, Willow Amara Denknesh, born May 3, received for adoption in Ethiopia on Aug. 3 by David Nuss and Angela Lee, Denver Colo.

O'Rourke, Benjamin Robert, Oct. 17, to Russell and Michelle Greiser O'Rourke, Telford, Pa.

Phillips, Quinn David, Oct. 5, to Darrell and Kelly Bateman Phillips, Orrville, Ohio

Scott, Jace Jeffrey, Oct. 2, to Jeffrey and Lori Fox Scott, Quakertown, Pa.

Shoemaker, Jordyn Eve, Oct. 9, to Tim and Tama Duncan Shoemaker, Harrisonburg, Va.

Stamp, Brady Garrett Kaufman, Oct. 3, to Brian and Natalie Kaufman Stamp, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Steiner, Seth Elijah, Sept. 22, to Ryan and Hannah Rohrer Steiner, Orrville, Ohio.

Suydam, Eleanor "Ella" Noelle, Oct. 10, to Clayton and Renee Miller Suydam, Lancaster, Pa.

Trost, Zachary Matthew, Oct. 3, to Matthew and Crystal Good Trost, Harrisonburg, Va.

Wagler, Henry Thomas Nussbaum, June 14, to Derek and Tina Nussbaum Wagler, Madison, Wis.

Yoder, Jaydon Charles, Oct. 11, to Aaron and Tina Klassen Yoder, Somerset, Pa.

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EXPERIENCE SOUTH AMERICA (March 28 - April 11)
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MOSCOW and SIBERIA (May 24 - June 4)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with AMBS (May 25 - June 4)
MENNONITE GREAT TREK ALONG the SILK ROAD (May 25 - June 9)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 4-16)
ENGLAND, SCOTLAND and WALES (June 25 - July 7)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE (July 7-20)
EXPLORING YOUR FAMILY ROOTS in EUROPE (August 25 - September 7)
MENNONITE STORY in POLAND with PETER KLASSEN (September 16-24)
CHINA and a YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE (October 8-21)

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Benefits and challenges of online courses:

What students say

"**First,** I liked the fact that students were from around the world. Second, people were reflecting on their readings while still being in the context of their present ministry."

– *Ray Epp, Yubarigun, Japan, Master of Arts in Peace Studies student who has studied both on campus and online*

"**Online courses** made it possible for me to continue gaining credits without always having to invest days on the road. This was a HUGE benefit for me and almost always outweighed any disadvantages, although I would not have wanted to do all my work online.

"What was challenging was that the computer monitor is "flat" (pun not intended, but also true!), compared to being in a classroom with a live instructor to whom one can ask immediate questions. Profs in a live classroom expound on ideas in a lecture, too, in a way that doesn't happen online."

– *Jane Roeschley, associate pastor of Mennonite Church of Normal, Normal, Ill., 2007 Master of Arts in Christian Formation graduate* ●

Mary E. Klassen

LeNora Klassen Duerksen (holding book) took advantage of the wide range of delivery systems for completing the Master of Divinity degree in pastoral care and counseling. She began taking courses in Kansas at the AMBS–Great Plains extension. She came to AMBS several summers for intensive two-week courses and weekend courses and then moved to Elkhart for periods of on-campus study to fulfill the requirement of completing 30 credit hours in residence in Elkhart. She returned to AMBS in summer 2007 for her last course, From Daniel to Jesus: Early Judaism in the Second Temple Period, a two-week course taught by Steve Schweitzer. She says she accomplished the program of study in "an unusual three years—2004–07—while still a resident of Kansas, maintaining relationships with my husband, cat, dogs, chickens and long-horn cattle!" She now is director of senior ministries at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan., and part-time chaplain at Sunshine Meadows Retirement Community in Buhler.

Other class members shown above are Reuben Glick Shank, Jim Smith and Ruth Kelly.

Extension sites

AMBS–Great Plains

To find out more about the AMBS–Great Plains extension in central Kansas, go to **www.ambs.edu/greatplains.**

A link there opens the course list for 2007–08.

Winnipeg Centre for Ministry Studies

WCMS is an inter-Mennonite partnership on the campus of Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man. Students in WCMS courses can earn credit at AMBS.

See upcoming courses, at **www.ministrystudies.ca.**

AMBS–Iowa

Courses are offered in southeast Iowa. See more at **www.ambs.edu/academics/extension-programs/ambs-iowa.** ●

Not your traditional seminary courses

Hybrid courses (spring)

Principles of Pastoral Care

Daniel Schipani, Ph.D., Psy.D.

Three credit hours.

Meets on campus Feb. 15–16 and May 16–17, with online work in between.

Principles of Youth Ministry

Andy Brubacher Kaethler, M.A., Ph.D. student.

Three credit hours.

Meets on campus Feb. 15–16 and April 18–19 with online work in addition.

Online courses (spring)

Beginning Hebrew: Ruth

Steve Schweitzer, Ph.D.

Four credit hours.

(also offered on campus)

Eastern Christianity

Walter Sawatsky, Ph.D.

Three credit hours.

Off-campus course

Celtic Pilgrimage (summer)

June 14-30, 2008

Led by Marlene Kropf, D.Min., and Willard Roth, spiritual director and retired pastor.

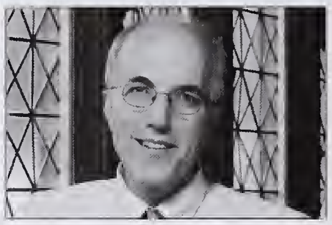
Three credit hours (also available for people who do not wish seminary credit).

For more information, contact Rosemary Reschly: rreschly@ambs.edu; 574-296-6244. ●

President's Window

With all the talk about new delivery systems in theological education, it is good to remember that "delivery" cannot be one-way. Education for mission and ministry is not a product that can be packaged at places such as Elkhart and shipped to the world. Leadership formation is a *process*. It demands give-and-take between teacher and student, between theory and practice. For Anabaptists, learning happens with teachers and students accountable to Spirit, Scripture and faith community.

The church is calling on Mennonite seminaries to make pastoral and theological education accessible—geographically, economically and culturally—for places and people currently underserved. AMBS takes this seriously, and we are learning that:



- A seminary changes—for the better—by having more connection with sites of ministry and mission. Theory is good, but practice hones theory.
- While graduate-level degree programs need to remain central at AMBS, we will serve the church best if we also offer non-degree opportunities and collaborate with undergraduate institutions to provide college-level education. Such nontraditional delivery systems allow the seminary to learn from diverse ethnic, cultural and economic groups that have much to teach about evangelism, worship, suffering and community.
- Online learning can be good, but there are challenges. It is more difficult for some online students to feel connected to professors and fellow students, and the dropout rate is higher.
- Hybrid courses (part face-to-face and part online) are more successful and rewarding than courses that are strictly online.
- Keeping a vibrant face-to-face learning community at Elkhart gives AMBS a base from which to offer a online and extension courses elsewhere.

When Jesus called his followers to be witnesses "to the ends of the earth," he probably did not have modern travel and communication in mind. But in this era of globalization, even the classroom extends to the ends of the earth, and theological education can be stronger for it.

— J. Nelson Kraybill

Alumni News

Greg Yantzi (Master of Divinity 1996) was ordained at Harrow (Ont.) Mennonite Church, October 14, 2007.

Karen Weldy (Master of Divinity 2003) was ordained at Southside Mennonite Fellowship, September 30, 2007.

Garry Jost (Master of Divinity 2000) received a Doctor of Ministry from Drew University, Madison, N.J. His project was "Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength: An Authentic Encounter with the Bible in its Original Languages."

Ted Grimsrud (Master of Arts: Peace Studies 1983) is author of Embodying the Way of Jesus: Anabaptist Convictions for the Twenty-First Century (Wipf & Stock 2007). Ted is associate professor of theology and peace studies at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Panorama

Fall issue of *Vision*

Gayle Gerber Koontz, AMBS professor of theology, is the editor of the fall issue of *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology,* focusing on suffering. This journal is copublished by the Institute of Mennonite Studies at AMBS and the Institute for Theology and the Church at Canadian Mennonite University. You can read Gayle's editorial and several articles online at **www.mennovision.org/Volume8-2.htm.**

Mission lectureship

Darrell Guder, leading authority on missional theology, will be featured in the Shenk Mission Lectureship at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, November 30 and December 1. See **www.ambs.edu/news-and-publications/events-and-news/guder.**

Call for presentations

AMBS extends an invitation for proposals for presentations to be given at the conference, "Upgraded? The influence of technology on Christian worship," August 7–9, 2008. See more at **www.ambs.edu/news-and-publications/events-and-news/upgraded.**

AMBS green building featured

The new AMBS Library and Campus Center is featured in the summer 2007 issue of *In Trust,* a magazine for board members of seminaries. The article focuses on four seminaries that are demonstrating good stewardship by emphasizing sustainability. To read the article, to go **www.intrust.org**, and select *Read the Magazine.*

Fall 2007
Volume 18 Issue 1

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor and Designer: Mary E. Klassen

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite.*

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Yoder, Layla Grace, Oct. 19, to Lewis and Monica Miller Yoder, Wooster, Ohio.

Zercher, Ava Catherine, Sept. 6, to Charlie and Trischa Speicher Zercher, Elkhart, Ind.

MARRIAGES

Beichler/Painting: Andrea Beichler, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, and Matt Painting, Orrville, Ohio, June 2, in Orrville.

Clark/Wood: David Clark, Newport, Wash., and Leona Bergen Wood, Newport, June 2, at Spring Valley Mennonite Church, Newport.

Cordero/Freed: Priscila Cordero, Cuenca, Ecuador, and Daryl Freed, Elroy, Pa., Sept. 22, at an outdoor ceremony in Cuenca.

Devine/Otto: Michael Devine, Dover, Ohio, and Linda Otto, North Canton, Ohio, Oct. 13, at the Hartville Kitchen, Hartville, Ohio.

Garber/Robbins: Aaron Garber, Low Point, Ill., and Shannon Robbins, Benson, Ill., Sept. 15, at Metamora Park on the square, Metamora, Ill.

Gustin/Sharp: Sarah Ann Gustin, Middletown, Pa., and Brian Sharp, Mount Joy, Pa., Oct. 20, at First Church of God, Middletown.

Hostetler/Robertson: Charissa Hostetler, Lawrence, Kan., and Chad Robertson, Lawrence, Oct. 6, at Hesston Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kan.

Landis/Seaman: Chelsea Landis, Harleysville, Pa., and Joshua Seaman, Telford, Pa., Sept. 14, at Living Faith Fellowship Church, Souderton, Pa.

Liechty/Owens: Brandon Liechty, Manhattan, Kan., and Stephanie Owens, Manhattan, Sept 27, at Hesston Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kan.

Reeves/Simon: Jami Reeves, Buhler, Kan., and Matthew Simon, Hutchinson, Kan., Oct. 13, at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Seeds/Yoder: Sarah Seeds, Orlando, Fla., and Dustin Yoder, Sugarcreek, Ohio, Sept. 22, at Skyview Ranch, Millersburg, Ohio.

DEATHS

Alderfer, Ernest W., 83, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 6. Spouse: Beulah Young Alderfer. Parents: Howard and Florence Wambold Alderfer. Children: Ann Leatherman, E. Rodney, Larry R.; eight grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 10 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Franconia, Pa.

Beck, Verden L., 89, Archbold, Ohio, died Oct. 12. Spouse: Letha Short Beck. Parents: Henry and Emma Nofziger Beck. Children: E. Dean, Daryl, Joyce Klingelsmith, Neal; 12 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 16 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Bender, Maurice William, 76, Wellman, Iowa, died Oct. 12. Spouse: Lola Jean Brenneman Bender. Parents: Leroy and Ida Bender. Children: Ken, Mike, James; three grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 15 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

Cressman, Nancy Hunsberger, 59, Harleysville, Pa., died Sept. 26. Spouse: David E. Cressman. Parents: Norman and Viola Erb Hunsberger. Children: David, Kenneth, Robert, Christopher, Tina Landis; 12 grandchildren; Funeral: Sept. 29 at Franconia Mennonite Church, Franconia, Pa.

Detwiler, Elizabeth L., 79, Lansdale, Pa., died Sept. 30. Parents: Henry L. and Eva C. Landis Detwiler. Funeral: Oct. 6 at Williams-Bergey-Koffel Funeral Home, Franconia, Pa.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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- fax 574-535-6050
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Eash, E. Lorene Nofziger, 86, Archbold, Ohio, died Oct. 1. Spouse: Elon Eash. Parents: Harley and Fannie Aeschliman Nofziger. Children: William, Neal, Marybeth Watterson, Phillip; nine grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 7 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Ediger, Rubena, 86, Inman, Kan., died Oct. 19. Spouse: George E. Ediger. Parents: Herman F. and Sarah Kasper Foth. Children: Dennis, Stanley, Steven; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 22 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Fielitz, John Junior, 83, Stryker, Ohio, died Sept. 23. Parents: John and Verna Graber Fielitz. Funeral: Sept. 27 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker.

Grimm, Agnes Bernice Mills, 100, Flanagan, Ill., died Oct. 19. Spouse: Howard Stephenson Grimm (deceased). Parents: Edward and Grace Murphy Mills. Children: Carolyn Grimm Forney; five grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 21 at Prairieview Mennonite Church, Flanagan.

Hackman, Mabel Anna Wenger, 93, Des Allemands, La., died Sept. 30 of Parkinson's disease. Spouse: Lester Moyer Hackman (deceased). Parents: Chester Arthur and Salome Christophel Wenger. Children: Gordon, Polly Duhe, Robert, Frances Wood, Lester; 11 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 2 at Des Allemands Mennonite Church.

Hanson, Grace Juhnke, 84, McPherson, Kan., died Sept. 17. Spouse: Kenneth U. Hanson (deceased). Parents: Wesley C. and Amelia Graber Juhnke. Children: Craig, Tamara Hanson; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 21 at First Mennonite Church, McPherson.

Hook, Wanda Louise Woods, 60, Hesston, Kan., died Sept. 30 of lymphoma. Spouse: Arlis Hook. Parents: Raymond and Pauline Unruh Woods. Children: Deb Hoge, Brian; two grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 2 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

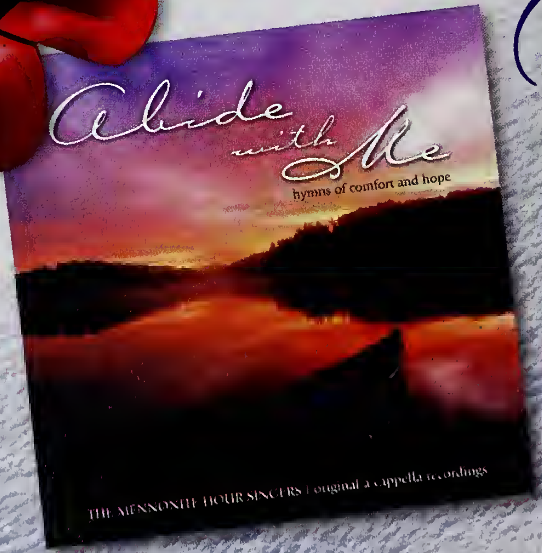
Kroeker, Irvin D., 63, Inman, Kan., died Oct. 19. Spouse: Shirley J. Thiessen Kroeker. Parents: Martin E. and Marie T. Doerksen Kroeker. Children: Stanley T., Raymond T., Wendell T., Gail T. Monroe; 12 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 23 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Lais, Barbara Elizabeth Kropf, 91, Lebanon, Ore., died Sept. 20. Spouse: John Lais (deceased). Parents: Ezra and Ida Eash Kropf. Children: Idella Mukasa, Irene Bornman, Dan; 10 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 24 at Lebanon Mennonite Church.

Lichti, Elda R. Ewert, 95, Newton, Kan., died Sept. 23. Spouse: Rudolph A. Lichti (deceased). Parents: Henry A. and Susie Krause Ewert. Children: Marlin; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 26 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

Mast, Rachel Maxine Mishler, 81, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 30 of cancer. Spouse: Harley Mast. Spouse: Wendell Whitehead (deceased). Parents: LeRoy and Mary Sherck Mishler. Children: Gayle Anderson, Kirby Whitehead, Jim Whitehead, Gary Whitehead, Bob Whitehead, Duane Mast, Nancy Troyer, Fern Mast; nine grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 3 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Miller, Marner, 93, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 7. Spouse: Lala M. Hochstetler Miller. Parents: Abraham and Lena Marner Miller. Children: Shirley Miller, David, Larry, Marlin; 12 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 12 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.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Miller, Patricia Anne, 60, North Canton, Ohio, died Oct. 16. Spouse: William R. Miller. Children: William R. II "Billy," Jennifer Sue "Jenny" Wetshtein, Jacob "Jake"; two grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 20 at Hartville Mennonite Church, Hartville, Ohio.

Nafziger, Verna M. Sutter, 98, Hopedale, Ill., died Sept. 22. Spouse: Arthur W. Nafziger (deceased). Parents: Amos and Mattie Mart Sutter. Children: Paul A., Joel L., Patricia A. Murphy, Faye M. Coultas, Betty Jean Cender; 15 grandchildren; 60 great-grandchildren; 13 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 27 at Hopedale Mennonite Church.

Renno, Erie H., 88, Belleville, Pa., died Oct. 8. Spouse: Verna A. King Renno. Parents: Joseph Y. and Annie Yoder Renno. Children: Joseph Y., Sara E. Hartzler, R. Ann Kanagy, Faith L. Treaster, Thomas E., Robert L.; 17 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Oct. 12 at Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Riehl, Mary Anna, 85, Lancaster, Pa., died July 4 of lung cancer. Parents: Aaron Kaufman and Malinda Glick Riehl. Funeral: July 6 at Bart Mennonite Chapel, Lancaster.

Sauder, Orval Eugene, 73, Pettisville, Ohio, died Oct. 14 of a heart attack. Spouse: Esther Lehman Sauder. Parents: Edward and Wilma Wyse Sauder. Children: Randall, Timothy, Brad, Karen Fosnight; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 18 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Schweitzer, Alarion, 90, Cairo, Neb., died Sept. 16. Spouse: Edna "Marie" Beckler Schweitzer (deceased). Parents: John and Matilda Stutzman Schweitzer. Children: Leona Saltzman, Mervin, Glenda Rediger, Marlin; 12 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 20 at Cairo Baptist Church.

Shellenberger, Marlin C., 83, Manheim, Pa., died Sept. 17. Spouse: Ruth Peters Shellenberger (deceased). Parents: William and Joyce Shellenberger. Children: Marlin E., Larry L., Jay G., Lois J. Martin, Fay I. Huber; 10 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 21 at Pleasant View Retirement Community, Hoffer Auditorium, Manheim.

Showalter, Leonard Shank, 78, Waynesboro, Va., died Oct. 5. Spouse: Ann Marie Olesh Showalter. Parents: Ira and Edna Shank Showalter. Children: Valerie Kay Weaver, Brent R.; two grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 9 at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro.

Springer, Pauline Sadie Nafziger, 82, Hopedale, Ill., died Oct. 6. Spouse: Carrol C. Springer (deceased). Parents: Eldon R. and Sadie Sutter Nafziger. Children: Randy, Jim; three grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 10 at Hopedale Mennonite Church.

Swartley, William D., 89, Souderton, Pa., died Sept. 29. Spouse: Valeria Landes Swartley. Parents: William K. and Susan Derstine Swartley. Children: Carol L. Longacre, Janet L. Goshow, William L., Elizabeth Heavener; 11 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 3 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Thomas, Marie Miller, 81. Telford, Pa., died Sept. 22. Spouse: Coevel W. Thomas. Parents: Jacob and Fannie Sommers Miller. Children: Karen Loker, David, Jr., Lois Thomas, Bruce; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 25 at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, Blooming Glen, Pa.

Weaver, Mary Jane Kilmer, 88, Elkhart, Ind., died Sept. 28. Spouse: Arthur Weaver (deceased). Parents: Herbert and Frances Leonard Kilmer. Children: Dr. Loren, Francis Weaver Grill. Funeral: Oct. 20 at Hively Avenue Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Welty, Ida M., 84, Smithville, Ohio, died Oct. 10 following a brief illness. Spouse: Denver L. Welty. Parents: Edwin and Mary Bixler Zimmerly. Children: Larry, Donald, Nancy Yutzy; four grandsons; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 13 at Wooster Mennonite Church, Wooster, Ohio.

White, Ruth H. Ebersole, 76, East Petersburg, Pa., died Sept. 15. Spouse: Paul R. White. Parents: Benjamin and Laura Ebersole. Children: Ann L. White. Funeral: Sept. 20 at Erisman Mennonite Church, Manheim, Pa.

Wiand, Bob Lee, 61, Fisher, Ill., died Oct. 15 in a semi-truck accident. Parents: C. Edward and Anna Baker Wiand. Children: Scott, Renae Glass, Rachael Wiand; one grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 20 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher.

Wipf, Gloria Wallmann, 79, Glendale, Ariz., died Sept. 30. Spouse: John S. Wipf, Sr. Parents: Frank F. and Sarah Ischetter Wallmann. Children: John Jr., Paulette Stravitz; five grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 6 at Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, Phoenix, Ariz.

Yoder, Paul, 90, Milford, Neb., died Oct. 2. Spouse: Bernice Yoder (deceased). Parents: John and Rebecca Miller Yoder. Children: Robert, Carolyn Bradley, Steven; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 6 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

Mennonite Foundation Eastern Region Representative

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) is seeking an individual for their Telford, Pa., office to represent Mennonite Foundation with a focus on meeting donors' needs through charitable gift planning services and providing support of development activities of Anabaptist denominations, church institutions, and affiliated organizations. Qualified applicants will have a bachelor's degree in an applicable field; prior experience in charitable gift planning and/or estate planning; strong relationship building skills; ability and willingness to travel regionally. For more information about the responsibilities and qualifications of this position, please visit our Web site, www.mma-online.org, and go to "Careers."

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Landis Homes, a ministry serving aging adults, seeks a ***full-time director of gift planning***. Responsibilities include planning and implementing fund-raising activities, including annual appeals, planned giving, capital campaigns and special events. Prefer candidate with at least two years experience in fund raising, a bachelor's degree, effective communication skills and an understanding of and appreciation for the Mennonite faith. Send resumé to: Human Resources, Landis Homes, 1001 East Oregon Road, Lititz, PA 17543 or email aheinly@landishomes.org. Learn more about Landis Homes at www.landishomes.org.

Participants wanted in developing tractors for the third world. www.boscomut.com

Executive director: **Fairview Fellowship Home** in Fairview, Okla., seeks an ***executive director*** (with an administrator's license) to lead its150-resident and $5-million budget campus. Reporting to the board of directors, the new executive will provide leadership to this Mennonite Brethren affiliated campus with 126 health-care beds and 32 independent living units. Submit inquiries to Caryn Howell: MHS Alliance, 234 S. Main St., Suite 1, Goshen, IN 46526, 574-537-8736, or carynhowell@msn.com.

Men's retreat at **Spruce Lake Retreat** Jan. 17-18, 2008, featuring speaker Mark Vincent and musician Steve Garrett, with a spiritual and personal challenge "for guys." Early registration by Dec. 15 ($94.40). Regular package $104.40. Pastors may attend for $50/person. Spruce Lake is a Mennonite retreat center in the Pocono Mountains. Call 800-822-7505; www.sprucelake.org.

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Executive director. **Menno-Hof Amish/Mennonite visitors center** in Shipshewana. Responsible for implementing the strategic direction for the organization; provides the senior leadership to achieve organizational goals; oversees fund -raising and constituent relations. Qualifications: Strong knowledge of the Anabaptist faith tradition; experience in strategic planning; ability to communicate issues of faith and culture passionately. Complete job description available at www.mennohof.org. Application deadline Dec. 15. Send resumés or inquiries to Leanne Farmwald c/o Menno-Hof, PO Box 701, Shipshewana, IN 46565 or lfarmwald@aol.com.

Conrad Grebel University College invites applications for a ***full-time regular faculty position*** in undergraduate religious studies and graduate theological studies at the University of Waterloo, with a teaching and research specialty in Anabaptist-Mennonite theology. The appointment will begin July 1, 2008, at either assistant or associate professor level. Applications will be accepted until Nov. 9, or until the position is filled. The college is committed to employment equity. Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be given priority. For further information about the position, qualifications and application procedures, see: www.grebel.uwaterloo.ca/positions.

Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., an urban congregation of approximately 300, invites applications for a ***full-time lead pastor***. The successful candidate will lead a ministry team in empowering our congregation; be gifted in preaching and worship planning; reflect Anabaptist beliefs; be competent in administration and visitation; develop authentic spiritual lives in members and seekers; build on the strengths of our rich cultural heritage. We want to follow Jesus. We are ready for renewal. Please contact: Muriel Bechtel, Conference Minister, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, 4489 King Street East, Kitchener, Ontario N2P 2G2; www.wkumchurch.com.

Swamp Mennonite Church seeks a passionate ***full-time senior pastor*** to focus on preaching, pastoral care and equipping leaders. SMC is a Christ-centered, welcoming church (regular attendance of 140) that is a fellowship of believers committed to serving our community, living in peace and making Anabaptist/Mennonite faith and worship relevant in the Quakertown, Pa., area. Seminary training is required. Interested people should email the pastoral search committee at swampsec@fast.net.

The **Salem Mennonite Church**, located near the growing community of Tofield, Alta., (45 minutes southeast of Edmonton) is seeking a ***lead pastor*** to minister to our congregation of 125 people. The successful candidate will have previous pastoral experience and/or a bachelor of theology degree or equivalent. Compensation will be commensurate with qualifications. Interested people should forward their resumés to: Carla Fendelet, secretary, Salem Mennonite Church, Box 56, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0; fax: 780-662-0106; email cgfen@telus.net.

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The Book of Buechner: A Journey Through His Writing by Dale Brown (Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, $24.95) explores the ways Frederick Buechner's writings, particularly his fiction, presents the possibilities of grace in the midst of the ambiguities of human existence and introduces themes of Christian faith.

Losers, Loners and Rebels: The Spiritual Struggle of Boys by Robert C. Dykstra, Allan Hugh Cole Jr. and Donald Capps (Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, $19.95) contends that adolescent boys often experience themselves at various times as losers, loners and rebels. Through these common experiences of life, boys gain self-awareness, self-transcendence and self-sufficiency, concepts that take root in the spirituality that will last their lifetime.

The Joy Factor by Jep Hostetler (Herald Press, 2007, $11.99) offers his unique approach on the importance of humor in health and faith. His challenge to reassess our humor index helps us accept what is, celebrate what we can and find joy again.

Sing the Story by Kenneth Nafziger and the Story Singers (Herald Press, 2007, $15.99) is a CD that features 21 hymns from the songbook *Sing the Story*. This music uses the seasons of the church year from Advent to Pentecost to tell the story of the life, ministry, death, resurrection and reign of Jesus Christ through selections of song and word.

God's People Now: Face to Face with Mennonite Church Canada by Robert J. Suderman (Herald Press, 2007, $12.99) presents what Suderman heard from visiting each congregation in Mennonite Church Canada, of which he is general secretary. It offers a glimpse of the denomination's needs, wants and concerns.

Road Signs for the Journey: A Profile of Mennonite Church USA by Conrad L. Kanagy (Herald Press, 2007, $12.99) uses data from a 2006 survey of Mennonite Church USA members to provide spiritual and sociological markers of the church today. Kanagy's pastoral and missional perspective points to signs of hope and renewal. Some of the material appeared in this magazine.

Resources for the Journey (Herald Press, 2007, $19.99) is a DVD and CD resource package that can help congregations discern God's plans and purposes for God's people. The DVD features seven modules for use in worship, small groups or Sunday school classes. The CD contains daily devotional suggestions, worship resources and small group and Sunday school curriculum, including leader's guides.

The God of Intimacy and Action: Reconnecting Ancient Spiritual Practices, Evangelism and Justice by Tony Campolo and Mary Darling (Jossey-Bass, 2007, $21.95) reveals some gems from the liturgical Christian tradition to evangelicals who may be ready for a refreshing change. A vital theme is that spirituality is not solely an individualistic practice but must lead Christians to love and help the oppressed.

The Fear of Beggars: Stewardship and Poverty in Christian Ethics by Kelly S. Johnson (Eerdmans, 2007, $20) tackles the real-life question of whether to give to beggars. Johnson reveals modern anxiety about dependence and humility as well as the importance of Christian attempts to rethink property relations in ways that integrate those qualities.

Whose Birthday Is It Anyway? (Alternatives for Simple Living, 2007, $3) provides ideas for celebrating Christmas responsibly. Visit www.simpleliving.org.

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A river runs through it

Gerald Shenk teaches at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., and is involved with The Table, an emerging Mennonite congregation in Harrisonburg.

An Iranian ayatollah, Abe Lincoln, Maria Montessori and a Serbian author nicknamed Dragon (Zmaj) have been watching me while I work. The combined value of their portraits when purchased would have been about $10. The faces stare up from a stack of currency notes on my desk, each with a story.

Among my early memories is another collection of money, the earnings I put away in a "missionary bank" to help with the work of people I prayed for, such as my uncle Nevin in far-off Africa. At five cents a basket, wages for picking potatoes did not accumulate rapidly; there was plenty of time to think about the adventures he would report from Shirati Hospital in Tanzania.

Along my journey, money has undergone huge changes. I used to think of it as pieces I could hold on to or give to someone. It had texture, shape and feel, even a certain smell.

Today, money is more like a fluid than a solid. It comes and goes through electronic accounts that operate in an invisible realm. We carry bits of plastic with our data encoded to ease the flow; there's a lot more flow than cash in "cash flow" now than there used to be. Income and expenses course through our lives like a river, creating deep channels.

How are we handling this powerful current that charges through our lives? By itself, a piece of money is little more than a promise, an instrument of trust. It is a commitment to treat claims as valuable, but its strength is only as trustworthy as the issuing entity. Two of the bills on my desk are of no monetary value today. The Italian lire note with Montessori, the lovely wizened teacher, has been replaced by the Euro. And the Yugoslav note, at face value 500 billion dinars, was worth less than a penny when I got it in Miloševic's Serbia in 1993. Dubious honor for a dragon.

Trust and a river current: Perhaps this more recent concept of money can help us get a better glimpse of what Jesus intended with his teachings on wealth. As recorded in Luke 15-16, Jesus warns against squandering property or hoarding wealth in isolation. Where riches cut us off from relating to others, Jesus clearly urges right use of resources for worthy purposes. His parables affirm the generosity of throwing a party in celebration and the cleverness that turns assets into building relationships. Too much accumulation is like a stagnant pond.

Our families are the first and the best places to teach trust and celebration. Generosity keeps the goodness flowing, rather than rotting like manna hoarded in the desert.

When our families are tuned to the values of God's kingdom, we will question the ordinary assumptions from our culture about how this powerful current should flow from one generation to the next. Being generous to our children does not mean it is wise to abruptly saddle them with large inheritances. If we teach our children the importance of productive work and meaningful service to others, why would we suddenly hand them large sums they did not earn? In former times, when this might have been the takeover of a family business or purchase of a first home, the share of family resources used to fund the new development was an investment of working capital. But with today's lengthy life spans, our elders may see their children reach retirement before the frugal parents die and make their bequests.

True wealth is never private or individual but a river of generosity.

My father has served for more than five decades as a wise counselor in finance for families and church agencies. His calm, confident approach to managing funds with careful stewardship is an inspiration to many. While the culture at large was embarking on a prolonged binge of spending more than we actually have, my parents with relatively low income always managed to spend less than they had, leaving plenty to share with others. I know this brings them joy.

They have informed their children that this generosity will continue even when their life here is finished. Various bequests will carry out their intentions for helping in the Lord's work long after they've stopped earning and spending on their own. They will also be generous toward their family in their estate plans, but that will not be the largest share of what they accomplish, when parting for good.

Such quiet generosity and joy are markers of God's kingdom, I'm certain. True wealth is never private or individual but a river of generosity. We are all richer by far when we trust that all is gift in the first place, held on loan from the giver of all good. Puts a different face on money, doesn't it? TM

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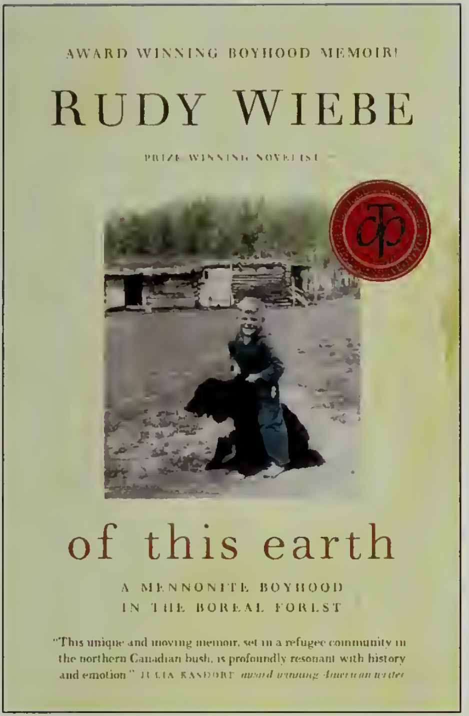
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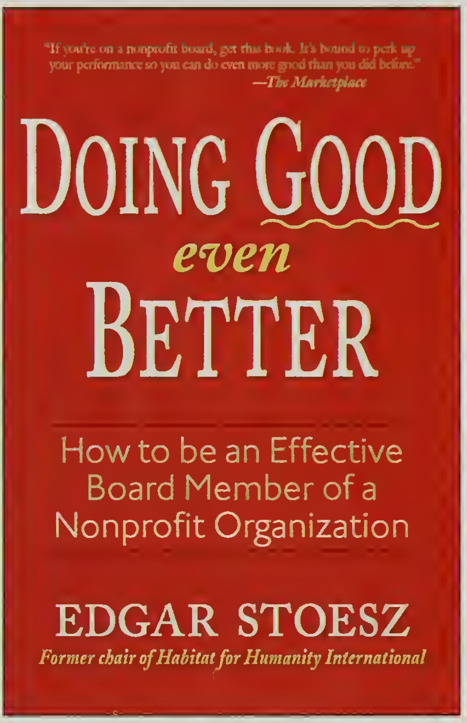
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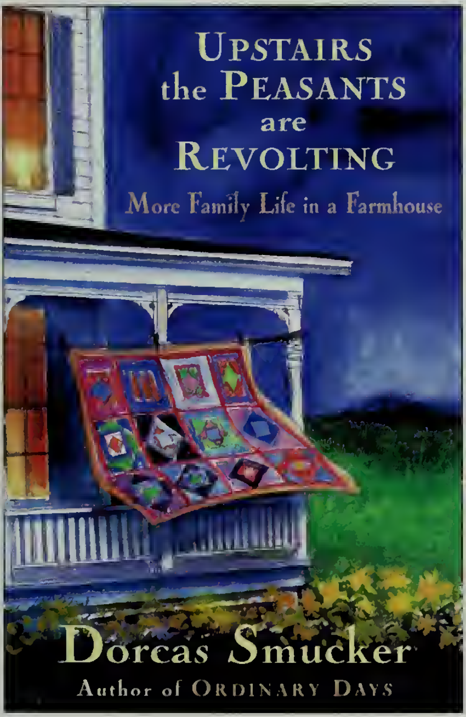
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Gordon Houser

An army of love

No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand.—Matthew 5:15

Mennonites have had an uneasy relationship with "the world." Our history includes a strong emphasis on nonconformity. We've tried to follow the command, "Do not love the world" (1 John 2:15).

True, that word does refer at times to the evil system that opposes God. It can even refer to the Roman empire, with it worship of the emperor and other gods. But "world" ("kosmos") also refers to the created world, and Scripture says that God loves the world (John 3:16). And we, as imitators of God, are to love it as well. The tricky thing—and a major issue we will continue to face as a church—is how to love the world without being swallowed up in its ways.

While our identity is not to be found in the world but in Christ, we still live in the world and are called to be faithful servants in it. We may ask ourselves if our historical tendency to avoid or fear the world has made us too hesitant to interact with it and offer our gifts for its good.

Has our historical tendency to avoid or fear the world made us too hesitant to interact with it and offer our gifts for its good?

Jennifer Davis Sensenig (page 8) calls on us to recognize that we live in a Superpower nation, just as Joseph did in Egypt. And, like Joseph, we are to use our gifts for the good of the nation where we find ourselves, for the good of the world.

She describes these gifts as a second language. Our first language is the language of faith, our identity in Christ and fluency in the Christian mother tongue. But we also learn languages such as "restorative justice, medicine, arts, community organizing, agriculture, business, computer technology, pedagogy and therapy, among others."

If we follow Joseph's example, not to mention Jeremiah's challenge to "seek the welfare of the city" (29:7), we will seek to use these gifts as a way of loving our world.

In her July 4 sermon at San José 2007, which is adapted here, Sensenig uses the Bible's scandalous (to us) imagery of combat gear to call us to action. "We stand as one body in a Superpower nation," she writes. "We are an army of love, with truth telling as our belt, justice across our chest, wearing sandals of peace, headgear of salvation and packing the Word."

Even though we live in the most powerful (by the world's standards) nation, we are not to live by those standards. Sensenig writes, "God does not call us to preserve our wealth or our status but to give our lives for others."

Mennonites have always been good at service, but I wonder how much of it has been a paternalistic kind of service that does not recognize the gifts of those we serve.

Lisa Schirch (page 12) is a Mennonite who uses her second language of peace building to teach at a military academy. As we exercise our gifts in the world, can we learn that those we may have tried to separate from also have moral concerns and gifts to offer us? Can we learn not to hide our lamp under a bushel basket but let it "shine before others so that they may see [our] good works and give glory to [our] Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16)?

As we live out our faith in the world, we will discover our own shortcomings and how we may be complicit in realities we'd prefer blaming on others. Schirch learned that she must not only oppose militarism but unjust consumption. She points out that too many of us are addicted consumers and that war is a means of defending our consumer-based lifestyle. Thus, she writes, "simple living [is] a vital element of global security."

At San José 2007, delegates mandated a study of "national identity" issues. If we are to love the world as God loves, we must recognize that we live in a Superpower nation and use our gifts as sacrificial soldiers in God's "army of love."

That may sound strange to our pacifist ears, but stranger, and worse, is hiding our lamp under a bushel basket.—*gh*

This article is available as a podcast at www.The Mennonite.org

ONLINE

The Mennonite

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good preaching

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A view of the mountains

Kenneth Thompson is pastor of Friendship Community Church, Bronx, N.Y.

People visiting New York are fascinated by the high buildings surrounded by so many people. But I am struck by so many people surrounded by the high mountains. Mountains in New York City? Yes. Many struggle with "mountains" of fear and dismay that overshadow them.

Every minister shares Isaiah's prophetic cry to "prepare a way for the Lord, to make straight his paths; to raise the valleys and make low every mountain and hill." And we admire the power of our Lord Jesus' words to "speak to the mountains with faith in God to cast them aside." Yet there are honest moments when our longing to serve God well conflicts with our realities. Such moments leave us like the disciples standing at the base of a mountain, struggling with why we couldn't cast it out. What do we do with the mountains that resist our moving forward, rough places that yield no rest, jagged places that threaten peace?

During a season of prayer about some difficult periods in my life and ministry, God's comfort came to assure me that the struggles in life are resolved by the daily choice to trust him. God has a marvelous way of using the mountainous places in our lives to develop in us his sanctification and holiness. Until the life of Christ is placed within us, daily Christianity is an exercise in theoretical, sometimes clinical observations of life, devoid of the empathy that empowers compassion to action toward redemptive change and transformation.

God shows his presence in our lives through mountain experiences. King David's psalm of "walking through the valley of the shadow of death" with the Lord to comfort him is one example. Were it not for the overshadowing mountain of that humbling valley experience, David would not have known the comfort of the Shepherd's rod and staff, the protection and provision of the Lord and the courage to claim God's mercy and goodness the way he did.

In the hands of God, the mountains in your life serve as:

- a point of new beginnings and restoration after a traumatic experience, as Mt. Ararat served for Noah and his family;
- a crucial place of worship, willing sacrifice and miraculous provision, as Mt. Moriah served for Abraham and Isaac;
- a place of revelation in God's calling, as Mt. Sinai served for Moses and the children of Israel;
- a plateau of peace that views continued covenant blessings upon one's household long into the next generation, as Mt. Nebo and Mt. Pisgah served for Moses;
- a precipice that summons courage to take possession of God's long-awaited promises, as Mt. Hebron served for Caleb;
- a place of expectation where humble eyes finally see what's been so passionately believed in one's heart, as Mt. Carmel served for Elijah;
- a challenge to proclaim fearless faith, calling on God's grace in ways you've not known or previously understood before, like Zerubbabel did in Zechariah's vision;
- a platform for teaching and personal transformation, a defining moment that elevates the direction of your life and ministry as the Mount of Beatitudes served for Jesus;
- a place of testimony and sharing, of prayer, submission and consecrated trust in the will of God, as the Mount of Olives served for Jesus.

God removes mountains for us by moving us toward them. Pray today and ask for his view of those mountains, and God's grace will cast aside all fear and dismay. Nothing can separate you from his love and good purpose. Alleluia.

TheMennonite

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Cover: Rebecca Slough, academic dean and associate professor of worship and the arts, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Photo by Mary E. Klassen.

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Appreciates help through COMB

As treasurer of Crown Hill Mennonite Church, I want to express my appreciation to the churches who are part of the COMB (Covenant Mutual Benefits Plan) CEP Health Plan for Pastors, their families and other church employees for helping us pay medical expenses for our pastor's family. COMB is a plan in which churches can share in the medical expenses of fellow pastors and their families.—*Eldina Nussbaum, Orrville, Ohio*

Encouraged by meeting with Ahmadinejad

I was troubled as I read today's newspaper quoting a range of U.S. politicians from the Bush administration to presidential candidates from both parties as they rattle their sabers, threatening violent action in Iran. "MCC Continues Conversation With Iran" (Oct. 16) was a pertinent reminder that the Mennonite church is involved in these current events in a direct way. I am encouraged by the work of Mennonite Central Committee's delegation in starting and continuing a dialogue with Mr. Ahmadinejad. May we all implore our government's leaders to follow this example of respectful dialogue with those with whom we intensely disagree, lest more blood be shed in the Middle East.—*Matt Kaiser, Kansas City, Kan.*

Congregation has 25 acres available

On the front page of Illinois Mennonite Conference's *The Reporter* (September 2007) was a report on the closing of the Meadows Mennonite Church, in Chenoa, Ill. I am saddened by this event.

We like to think of our churches as growing healthy communities of faith, serving God and community. It makes you stop and think about the conditions that caused them to lose it. Possibly this can be a learning experience for all of us.

I have gotten involved with a rural church about 10 miles east of Kankakee, Ill., and 60 miles south of Chicago. The congregation is known as the Rehoboth Mennonite Church in St. Ann, Ill. The congregation remembers better days, when the church was full and the campground and day-care service were busy places. The small but faithful congregation is pondering what to do next. Some visions are to reactivate the campground and day care, explore the possibilities of a prison ministry working with ex-offenders teaching them the skills required to make it in today's complex society and develop a retirement community.

The Rehoboth Mennonite Church has about 25 five acres of land, mostly unused. With imagination and a lot of work, the possibilities are unlimited. I am taking this opportunity to invite others to become a participant in this faith-based initiative. If you feel this activity is God-inspired, please contact Rehoboth Mennonite Church, c/o Rose Covington, 14420 A E. 3000 S. Road, St. Ann, IL 60964.

If we share our visions, concerns and burdens, we can move our resources around the world and give everyone the opportunity to experience Christ's kingdom.—*Jerry Mares, Chicago*

Believes in God but dislikes church

For several years my faith in Christ has been hanging by a thread. I believe in God but dislike going to church. Sunday mornings my body is in a pew, but my mind is elsewhere. Bible reading only makes things worse, as the Christ in Scripture does not match the image portrayed in church or society. The church system is designed to offer a safe, nurturing community—stable and predictable. The mission is to make people feel comfortable and safe—especially longtime members. Studies I've read show women and seniors gravitate toward these things.

Feminine spirituality dominates our churches, and this makes it difficult for a man to be real in church. He must watch his language, mind his manners and be extra polite. To me it is intimidating and out of place to hold hands, singing music that is expressed in romantic words.

Many men I know avoid regular church attendance because they see it as a woman thing. I read a recent statistic that 13 million more adult women than men are in American churches on Sunday morning. Is it my fault that I feel out of place as a man in church on Sunday morning?—*Ken Fast, Newton, Kan.*

IN THIS ISSUE

A key part of most Mennonite worship services is the sermon. We offer two articles that look at preaching. Palmer Becker (page 10) presents five qualities of good sermons, and John Longhurst (page 12) asks if the sermon is still of viable use in our attention-deficient world. Cindy Miller (page 8) tells about her encounter with a homeless man in San José, Calif., during this summer's convention. Jim S. Amstutz continues the focus on pastoral ministry (page 15) with a glimpse of the priestly role pastors are called to play in a variety of situations. And Urbane Peachey (page 16) uses the shepherd imagery in the Bible to reflect what he calls the "ministry of recognition." The columns in this issue focus on mountains (page 2), questioning the Bible (page 18) and recent books (page 30). And editor Everett Thomas, fresh back from a three-month sabbatical, reflects on what he learned and offers thanks (page 32).—*Associate editor*

Response to Muslim leaders' letter

On the occasion of the Islamic Feast of Fast-Breaking (Eid al-Fitr), Oct. 13, a group of 138 Muslim leaders addressed an open letter, "A Common Word between Us and You," to leaders of Christian churches throughout the world. This letter seeks to identify common ground between Islam and Christianity in Jesus' commands to love God and the neighbor and calls for amicable relations between Muslims and Christians in the interest of world peace. The signatories are moderate and traditionalist Muslim scholars and leaders from both the Sunni and Shi'i communities in many countries. The full Muslim letter and the diverse responses to it by Christian leaders, the media and other concerned individuals are at the letter's official Web site: www.acommonword.com. James Schrag, Executive Director of Mennonite Church USA, wrote the attached letter of encouragement and response in consultation with Mennonite scholars. The letter gratefully acknowledges this Muslim initiative.

November 5, 2007

As [members of] one of the historic peace churches, we in Mennonite Church USA heartily thank the signatories of "A Common Word between Us and You" for recognizing that Christians worship one God and take Jesus' commands to love God and love our neighbors as central to our lives of faith. We appreciate the affirmation that Muslims and Christians hold important theological and ethical foundations in common, and we welcome the call for sincere dialogue between Christians and Muslims wherever we meet around the world.

We also respect "A Common Word" as a courageous expression of goodwill in the midst of less charitable Muslim voices and in the face of recurrent Christian hostility toward Muslims and misunderstanding of Islam. We repent for our role in perpetrating these unchristian actions and ask your patience and forgiveness as we grow in understanding you, our Muslim neighbors, and in practicing Christian love with you.

We understand the character of this love to be shaped by the teaching and personal example of Jesus. In addition to loving God and our neighbors, this means that we aim to love even enemies, and, like Jesus, we choose against using violence as a response to difference and conflict. We believe that Jesus has modeled for us a life of faithful obedience to God based on love, truth, reconciliation and justice. We seek the same, in response to God's love for all humankind expressed in innumerable acts of salvation, reconciliation, forgiveness and guidance and most fully in Jesus Christ (the Messiah). In sum, "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). In our faltering attempts to love as the Messiah loved, we thank God for the gift of his Spirit, who enables us to live our lives focused on God.

God has given each person the precious gift of choice, even the freedom to believe in God or turn to unbelief. In our Mennonite churches, adult baptism is a sign of the individual's decision to believe in and follow the Messiah. For that reason we baptize only after a person has made a mature decision to believe and to turn away from the ways of the world.

Our life as a church thereby witnesses to society and government that each person has the responsibility and freedom to choose their faith. We believe that in any society, the love of neighbor that you have so eloquently written about includes respect for that person's freedom to believe or not to believe, to choose his or her faith and religion. We would indeed welcome opportunity to talk more with Muslim friends and leaders about the implications of religious freedom, for this matter is of profound significance.

With you, we embrace the goal of loving our neighbors, while also recognizing that both Muslims and Christians often fall short of the ideal. We recognize that even today in too many situations Muslims are threatened by Christians, and in other situations, individual Christians or communities of Christians in Muslim regions experience restrictions and sometimes hostility. Let us repent of such actions toward one another and work together to assure the integrity and freedom for both communities, Christian and Muslim.

Many Mennonite Christians have enjoyed friendship with Muslims and cooperated together in a wide range of activities through the years. We in Mennonite Church USA continue to commend such interaction and strongly encourage Christians and Muslims around the world to meet, develop friendships and cooperate in endeavors of mutual concern as we discuss and bear witness to the theological and ethical foundations of our faith and life.

We thank those who have issued "A Common Word" and assure you that we will continue to pray and work for Christian-Muslim understanding, cooperation and peacemaking.

Sincerely,
James Schrag
Executive Director, Mennonite Church USA

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

I like my pastor's sermons (97 responses):

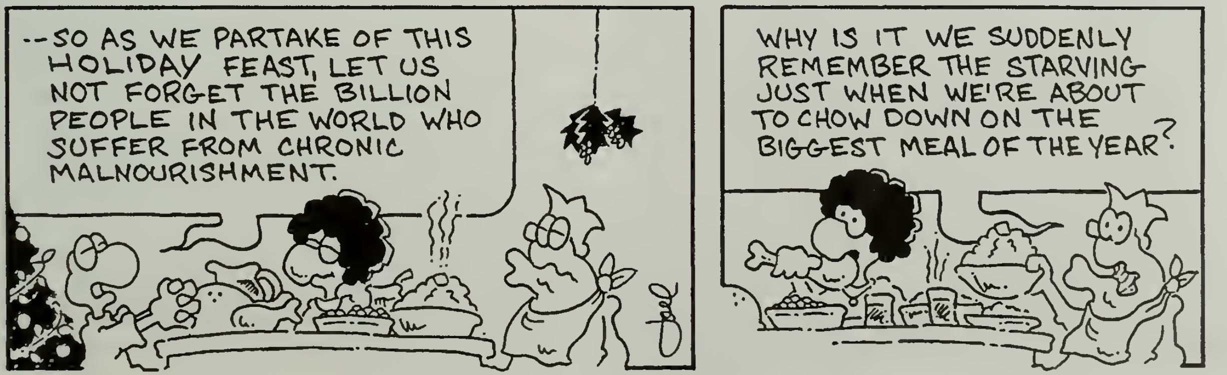
- ○ Nearly all the time (43%)
- ○ Most of the time (26%)
- ○ Some of the time (20%)
- ○ Rarely (9%)
- ○ Never (2%)

Check out the new poll question at www. TheMennonite.org

Note: Executive Leadership invites you to respond to Jim Schrag's letter at www.themennonite.org. We will also publish responses in Readers Say.

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


--SO AS WE PARTAKE OF THIS HOLIDAY FEAST, LET US NOT FORGET THE BILLION PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHO SUFFER FROM CHRONIC MALNOURISHMENT.
WHY IS IT WE SUDDENLY REMEMBER THE STARVING JUST WHEN WE'RE ABOUT TO CHOW DOWN ON THE BIGGEST MEAL OF THE YEAR?

IN BRIEF

Act like Jesus

The church is called to act like Jesus, Greg Boyd said at the 12th annual Anabaptist Vision and Discipleship Series conference, "Christian Ministry in a Red and Blue World," at Hesston (Kan.) College Oct. 19-21. Boyd, founding pastor of the 4,000-member evangelical Woodland Hills Church in Minneapolis, and a former theology teacher at Bethel University in St. Paul, said this was his first time at a Mennonite church, though "it feels like I'm coming home." John D. Roth, Goshen (Ind.) College history professor, editor of the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, and director of the Mennonite Historical Library, agreed that Boyd was preaching Mennonite theology. Roth's messages, while complex, might be summarized in two words: Practice humility. The two keynote speakers complemented each other, with Boyd telling stories and Roth reflecting on history and responding to Boyd's presentations.—*Susan Balzer*

Dirty ice

Percentage of fast-food restaurants with more bacteria in their ice than in their toilets, as tested by a Florida seventh grader: 70. —*Yes! magazine*

Larry Voth, Bethel fund-raiser, dies at 73

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Those who knew Larry Voth say he loved raising money, and Bethel College, for one, has benefited in countless visible and invisible ways.

A. Lawrence Voth, a pastor, administrator and Bethel College director of development for 28 years, died Oct. 27 in North Newton after a long illness. He was 73.

Larry Voth

Voth was born in Goessel, Kan., and graduated from Walton (Kan.) High School. He was a graduate of Bethel College with a B.A. in Bible and religion and earned his bachelor of divinity degree from Mennonite Biblical Seminary (MBS) in Elkhart, Ind. In 1956, he married Jane Nyce of Pretty Prairie, Kan., a graduate of the Bethel Deaconess School of Nursing and Bethel College. The Voths' three daughters also went on to graduate from Bethel.

From 1957-1973, Voth served in several pastoral and church leadership roles. While finishing his degree at Bethel, he was assistant pastor of First Christian Church in Newton, and while studying at MBS, he was as assistant pastor of Broadway Evangelical United Brethren Church in South Bend, Ind.

From 1961-1973, Voth was pastor of Community Mennonite Church in Markham, Ill., a suburb of Chicago. In 1964, Voth organized the Mennonite Voluntary Service unit in Markham, whose workers helped staff the children's day-care center the church had started.

During his years in Markham, Voth served on the Peace and Service Committee and the Executive Committee of the General Conference Mennonite Church, as well as a term as president of Central District Conference.

In addition to two day-care programs, under Voth's direction, projects in housing rehabilitation, family counseling and senior services were started, for which he proved to be a successful fund-raiser and grant writer.

Voth came to Bethel as director of development in 1973. At the time of his retirement in 2001, it was estimated that he had raised more than $50 million for Bethel College's annual fund and various capital campaigns. He was responsible for securing funding for at least eight major construction or renovation projects on campus.

Voth is survived by his wife, Jane, North Newton, and three daughters, Laurie Regehr, Halstead, Kan., Leslie Stephan, Haven, Kan., and Linda Mueller, North Newton, three sons-in-law and five grandchildren, as well as a brother, brother-in-law, sister-in-law and several nieces and nephews.—*Bethel College*

Bethany Christian Schools

Bethany students help clean up from tornado

Bethany Christian High School, Goshen, Ind., students Ben Mast (left) and Katie Hoekstra clean debris from a field southwest of Nappanee, Ind. The school's Student Body Association organized the Nov. 2 service project to assist in community relief efforts following the Oct. 18 tornado that hit Nappanee and the surrounding area. —*Bethany Christian Schools*

CPT Palestine announces Nativity campaign

HEBRON, West Bank—If the Christmas story were to happen today, Mary and Joseph would have a hard time getting to Bethlehem, says Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Palestine.

Since 2002, Israeli authorities have been building a separation barrier that snakes through the occupied Palestinian territories, in effect annexing valuable Palestinian land and water resources. To clear the way, Palestinians living near the security barrier often face the threat of home demolitions. According to Israeli human rights monitoring organization B'tselem, the separation barrier affects nearly half a million Palestinian residents, and the barrier separates almost 12 percent of the land on the Palestinian side of the 1967 Green Line from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories. When completed, the barrier will be 780 kilometers long.

The separation barrier surrounds Bethlehem, located in Palestine, on three sides and cuts off the city from Jerusalem only six miles away.

CPT Palestine is calling on Christians during the seasons of Advent and Christmas to erect a wall around Nativity sets in homes and churches to raise awareness of the separation barrier. They ask people to inform local media and use this

Jodi H. Beyeler

gil held for those dying in the Iraq War

ring a Nov. 2 lament vigil, Goshen (Ind.) College professor neritus of religion J.R. Burkholder reads a list of names of merican soldiers and Iraqi civilians who lost their lives in tober due to the Iraq War. The Goshen College Pax Club ganized the vigil, held outside Rep. Mark Souder's Goshen fice. A local mother of a soldier who died spoke, people sang song of mourning, and students, faculty and community embers offered prayers.—*Goshen College*

action as an opportunity to spread the word about the separation barrier. CPT encourages participants to take pictures of the Nativity after erecting the wall around it and send them as attachments to guest.49296@MennoLink.org. The team will compile the pictures for broader distribution. —*CPT*

Western District offers resources for churches

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Perhaps the most important thing a congregation does is nurture the Christian faith and life among people of all ages.

That's why Western District Conference of Mennonite Church USA has a staff person charged with that very task. WDC—with congregations from southern Nebraska to mid-Texas—is the only conference in Mennonite Church USA with a full-time worker in that area.

Marlene Bogard, WDC's minister of Christian nurture, has a role not everyone is familiar with. She has been working in the WDC Resource Library since 1990. She was named to her current post in 2001, in addition to directing the library. She has a master's degree in Christian ministry from Friends University in Wichita, Kan.

She is certified in Christian Relationship Enhancement and Prevention, a program for nurturing healthy marriages, and is one of two certified trainers in Mennonite Church USA in the prevention of clergy misconduct by FaithTrust Institute, based in Seattle.

Bogard wants people to know what she can offer. And her presentations "are adaptable for almost any church or faith-based group," she says. "They are research-based—part of my job is to keep up with the latest findings and literature, as well as biblical scholarship, in different areas."

Among the workshop and seminar topics Bogard offers are congregational hospitality, youth-adult mentoring programs, child protection policies, prevention of clergy misconduct, weekend marriage enrichment retreats and use of curricula.—*Melanie Zuercher*

Being on margins can be prophetic

ELKHART, Ind.—Mennonites and Pentecostals have perspectives in common, Cheryl Bridges Johns told students and faculty of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) on her recent visit as Theological Center Guest.

From Oct. 16-18, the Pentecostal theologian had opportunities to extend her interfaith dialogue as she met with AMBS students and faculty. Johns is professor of discipleship and Christian formation at Church of God Theological Seminary in Cleveland, Tenn. She serves in the Church of God-Mennonite Dialogue as well as in dialogues with several other Christian groups, including Roman Catholics and evangelicals.

She believes she is called to be on the margins, because "marginality in many ways can be a place of grace," she said. "It is often to the center that it can bring words that are fresh and prophetic." She also said, "Possibilities of new partnerships are found on the margins."

Noting that Mennonites also are on the margins of mainstream Christian denominations, she said, "We are different in many ways but we also are alike. ... At a time when Christianity itself is becoming marginalized, we can offer to our brothers and sisters what it means to be marginal and thrive, what it means to have a prophetic witness. Sometimes that is where the creative spirit does her most profound work."—*AMBS*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Burkholder named Ind.-Mich. conference minister

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference has appointed Timothy J. Burkholder interim executive conference minister, beginning part-time in November and full-time Dec. 1, overlapping with Sherm Kauffman (current executive conference minister) for several weeks. He will work through August 2008 or until a long-term lead conference minister is in place. Burkholder has served as chair of the conference's stewardship and finance commission since 2004. He is a member of Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. *—Indiana-Michigan Conference*

Bluffton students help flood victims

Multiple northwest Ohio towns were hit hard by flooding as a result of severe weather in August, and the people of Ottawa are still rebuilding their community months after the flooding subsided. For several weeks, Bluffton (Ohio) University students traveled to Ottawa to restore homes and hope, and on Oct. 27, they were joined by 200 volunteers during Ohio's seventh annual Make a Difference Day.—*Bluffton University*

My encounte

An encounter with a homeless ma

I asked God to relieve my fears, trusting that he who had brought me to this point would see me through.

I had no plans to reach out to a homeless person this summer, but I did. I arrived in San José, Calif., for the Mennonite Church USA convention early and explored the area around my hotel. I felt uncomfortable as I strolled the city and encountered the homeless. My most awkward feeling, however, was the quandary of whether to do something or ignore the situation? In the past, when I experienced fear of something, I needed to face it, though I had no intention of acting on that thought.

One evening I sat at a Chinese restaurant with three-fourths of my fried rice left over. For some reason I took the leftovers with me. On my way back to the hotel a young man approached me and asked for money for food. I declined and kept walking. Remembering the leftovers in my hand, I realized I could have fed him. But the face of a homeless man who sat by my hotel day-after-day, hour-after-hour came to mind. I felt God's gentle nudge to take my leftovers to him. I argued with God for awhile. As I approached the corner, I found him sitting on a bench with three other homeless men. I wondered how I could offer food to only one man, but God provided a way. Just as I came around the corner, this man got up and walked toward me. I offered him my food, made small talk with him and asked about the lady I had seen delivering sandwiches to him earlier, wondering if she was a mother or a sister.

"No, that's Sadie, the cat lady. Everyday she feeds the stray cats."

We ended our short conversation, and he insisted on giving me a hug. I received the hug as graciously as I could. Returning to my hotel, I struggled with what just happened. I asked God to relieve my fears, trusting that he who had brought me to this point would see me through.

The next morning I felt convicted to continue the relationship that had begun the night before. As usual, I found this man on his bench and handed him his breakfast. I told him he could expect me sharing each meal with him until my departure. He said his name was Ken. I asked how he got this way, and he was open about his alcoholism. As I left, he thanked me with a hug, but this did not feel as much of a violation as the first one.

On my way back to my room I wished I had not committed to three encounters each day. A Mennonite youth ran up from behind and said, "That was a really nice thing you did back there." He said that the night before, his youth group discussed what to do with their leftover pizza. Though he tried to persuade them to give it to someone in need, one youth said, "I don't want to relate to those kind of people."

Three meals later, as I returned to my room, Ken saw me walking by and yelled out my name. I approached him and found him drunk. With all the respect I had, I told him I could not talk with him right then. "Ken, can you sober up by morning so we can talk?"

"For you, honey, I can."

The next morning I found Ken all alone when I delivered his breakfast. This helped me relax and talk with him. I heard his stories of better days—days when he was making $17 an hour, when he was married, when he had money by winning a lottery. But there were also unpleasant days he shared—the day he found his wife with his best friend, when his divorce was final and he skipped town, heading for San José, when he graduated from rehab following a six-month recovery and celebrated by going to the liquor store. He told stories of 20 years of homelessness, of alcoholic parents and living in a house full of smokers.

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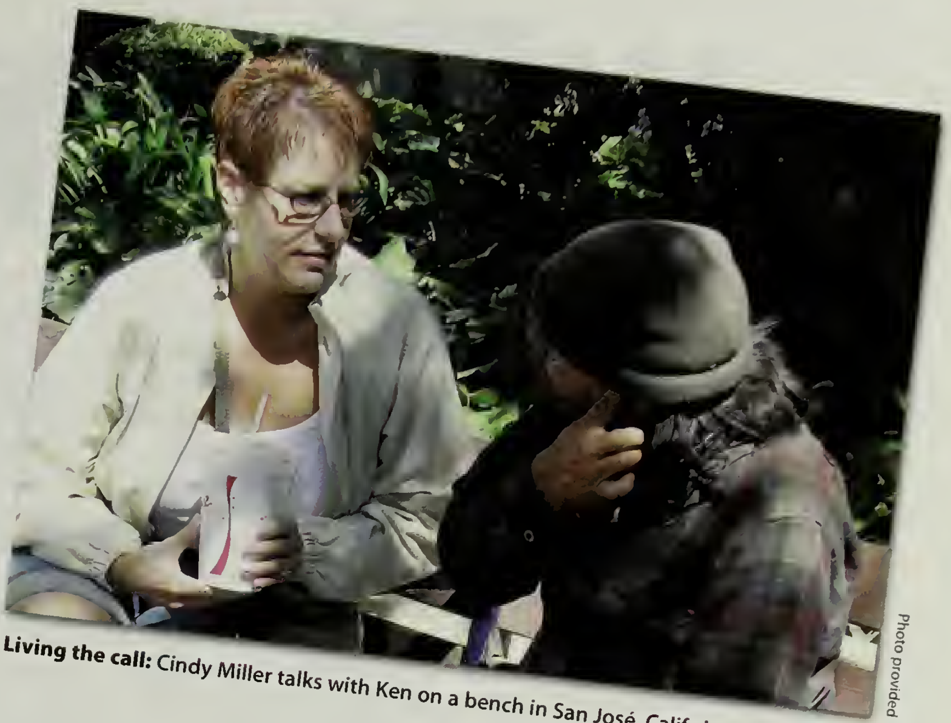
hanges two people.



Living the call: Cindy Miller talks with Ken on a bench in San José, Calif., in July.

Photo provided

"My mom was a witch, God love her." Then he said, "I wake up every morning thanking God for keeping me safe and for giving me another beautiful day." My life holds so many fewer challenges than his, yet I have many days I wake up falling short of that thankfulness. As I headed back to my hotel room, I felt blessed for having shared this time with him.

I felt God nudging me to bring Ken into my world. I needed to get four boxes from my hotel to the convention site. I asked Ken, who was more than willing to help. He kept his bike in the good care of a homeless friend, and I arranged for Ken to meet me at the hotel lobby. He arrived right on time and to my surprise had a utility cart, borrowed from his hotel connections. As we headed to the convention center, I wondered what people might think, perhaps not in judgment but in curiosity. I enjoyed showing him around the Mennonite Mission Network exhibit and introducing him to my friends and co-workers.

As the week wrapped up, I wanted a photo of Ken to add to my memories of my San José experience. Ken was more than eager to pose for a photo at my request, pulling out his prize possession, his bike. He positioned it just so, backing up to check the proper angle. A friend shot a couple photos of us. Ken was excited and asked if he could get copies. In one hour I had the photos developed and enclosed them in a greeting card. As I handed him the envelope, he said he didn't want to open it until his birthday, Dec. 2. Selfishly I convinced him to open it right away. He opened the card as if to be handling a precious piece of glass. He read it with reflection and gratitude, then looked at the photos. I wonder how long it had been since he saw himself in a photo. I suspect years.

Holding the photo of us, Ken said, "What are you doing hanging out with this drunk?"

I said, "You ought to see the characters I hang out with."

Later I headed to his usual spot on the park bench, only to find his friend Jimmie James. I told Jimmie James that if Ken could entrust him with his bike, I could entrust him to deliver cards to Ken. I had both a birthday card and a Christmas card for him. Jimmie James ran off to find Ken. As I waited, I realized he would probably be drunk, since it was the end of the day. I grieved that my last conversation with him would be tainted with intoxication.

Ken arrived in his drunkenness, and I said my goodbyes. I handed him the two cards, marked "Do not open until Dec. 2" and "Do not open until Christmas." In his thankfulness he hugged me for a long time. I took his hand and said goodbye.

At first it appeared Ken wanted no more of his life than he had. In an odd way, he was content. But I helped him imagine recovery, and for a split second he almost tasted it and wanted it. I will continue to pray for Ken over the years, in hopes he will find recovery and the fullness of life he could never have dreamed of.

While some attended an assembly entitled "Live the Call," I humbly found myself—by the grace of God—living the call. Ken was not the only person blessed through this experience. I will never forget the 52-year-old man from Pennsylvania named Ken who changed my life.

Cindy Miller attends Clay Community Church, South Bend, Ind., and serves as executive office assistant for Mennonite Mission Network.

r with Ken

by Cindy Miller

5 qualities of good sermons

We can preach

by Palmer Becker

Preaching has received more than its share of criticism. Some say, “Sermons are boring and irrelevant to everyday life.” Others complain that sermons are too long, moralistic or predictable. But we can preach differently.

Part of good preaching lies in good training, such as is being offered by our seminaries and pastoral training programs. Another part lies in a deeper understanding and application of who we are as Mennonites.

Below are five distinct qualities that rise out of our understandings of the gospel and the church. They can and should enable us to prepare and preach sermons that are effective and relevant to everyday life.

1. Our theology enables us to preach mission-oriented sermons.

Preachers of the Reformed tradition tend to begin with the holy, demanding side of God. This leads them to preach many doctrinal messages on justification by faith and how we can be saved from the wrath of this holy, demanding God. Mennonites tend to begin with the servant-nurturing side of God that we see in Jesus Christ. This understanding challenges us to preach messages that encourage us to be servant-like in the footsteps of Jesus.

While both the demanding and nurturing sides of God need to be preached, we need to recognize that we are strongly influenced in our preaching by how we perceive God. In *The Knowledge of the Holy*, A.W. Tozer says, “There is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God.”

An ethical, Christ-centered interpretation of Scripture empowers us to preach sermons that emphasize following Christ in all dimensions of life.

Why do we preach many mission, relief, reconciliation and discipleship sermons in Mennonite churches? They emerge from our understanding of God. We understand that he is like Jesus Christ. That understanding can and does make a profound difference in how we preach.

2. Our hermeneutics empowers us to preach sermons that are Christ-centered.

Many preachers do most of their preaching from a so-called “flat Bible.” They assume the words of Moses in the Old Testament are equal in importance to the words of Jesus in the New. Furthermore, they tend to go to the New Testament for their personal ethics and to the Old for their social ethics on issues such as war, capital punishment and justice.

Still other preachers—often those on the Religious Right—interpret the Scriptures from a dispensational point of view. They assume that to know God’s will we need to know for which dispensation or period of history it was revealed. Unfortunately this approach generally postpones the teachings of Jesus to a future age. As a result, these preachers neglect Jesus and do most of their preaching from either the Old Testament or the Epistles of Paul.

In contrast to these two approaches, Mennonites have traditionally interpreted the Scriptures from a Christocentric point of view, which sees Jesus as the fullest revelation of God and as the norm for both personal and social ethics. In *Anabaptists in Outline*, Walter Klaassen says, “All Anabaptists are united in emphasizing that the confession of Jesus as Lord must be combined with obedience to his words. If obedience is not there, the faith is, by definition, counterfeit.”

Flat Bible and dispensational interpretations of Scripture

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differently

often lead to justifying war, consumerism and the establishment of a political Israel. An ethical, Christ-centered interpretation of Scripture empowers us to preach sermons that emphasize following Christ in all dimensions of life. A Christ-centered hermeneutic can and does make a difference in how we preach.

3. Our emphasis on community enables us to preach to felt needs.

Pastors of mainline churches tend to use the Common Lectionary as a guide to the selection of texts and topics. While there is a place for the use of a lectionary, especially during the seasons of Advent and Lent, a strict following of a lectionary is probably incompatible with Mennonite preaching. It does not allow sufficient freedom to address such important themes as discipleship, peace and reconciliation and does not adequately allow for the immediate felt needs of the listeners to determine the choice of text and topic. As a result, the sermons often scratch where it does not itch.

Mennonite preaching was traditionally done by lay or bivocational ministers who were often of the same vocation as the people in the congregation. As they talked and worked with each other in the church and community, pastors were guided to texts and topics that spoke to the needs of their people.

In today's world, effective preachers walk among their people, offer personal pastoral care, visit parishioners at their places of work and join them in their mission ventures. Preachers who are in touch with the everyday physical and emotional needs of their people can and will preach differently from those who rely too heavily on a lectionary.

4. Our objectives challenge us to preach application-oriented messages.

Much Protestant preaching has been preoccupied with interpretation. If a passage of Scripture has been properly understood and creatively interpreted, the sermon has fulfilled its purpose.

While it is important to come to a careful and creative interpretation of the text, this is not the ultimate purpose of preaching. The purpose of preaching is to see lives changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ. D.L. Moody had a helpful perspective when he said: "The Scriptures were not given merely for our information. They were given for our transformation."

Being a believer who knows the Scriptures is not adequate. Our preaching needs to result in equipping followers to be disciplined and obedient to Jesus Christ. Hans Denck said it simply and profoundly when he said, "No one can truly know Christ unless he follows him in life."

In one way or another every sermon needs to help listeners make some kind of practical change in their thinking, attitudes or actions so that the reign of God may come more fully on earth as it is in heaven. It has been suggested that up to half of a sermon should be given to illustrations, reflections and exercises that help listeners apply the message to their daily lives.

Our concern for practical Christian living enables us to go beyond creative interpretation to practical, application-oriented messages.

5. The Holy Spirit enables us to preach with passion.

Preaching three times a month is often a requirement written into a pastor's job description. Unfortunately, this often leads to sermons preached out of duty or obligation and thus lack enthusiasm, passion or conviction.

People were amazed at the preaching of Jesus because he preached "as one having authority." People were also amazed at the early Mennonites who spoke with passion and conviction right to the moment of their martyrdom. Why was this true? They believed in what they were preaching and had a profound reliance on the Holy Spirit.

When preachers are insecure in themselves, in their relationships with the congregation or in what they are saying, their sermons lack authority, humor, fervor and hope. As a result, listeners go away insecure, discouraged or uninspired.

When a pastor has spent time with God, developed a well-prepared sermon and is filled with God's Spirit, he or she is more prone to be given an anointing or sense of confidence and joy in the preaching. The Holy Spirit empowers us to preach with warm emotion, enthusiasm and passion.

We Mennonites have a theology and heritage that can and should make a difference in the way we preach. Our understandings of God, Scripture, human need, discipleship and the Spirit of Christ have a profound effect upon our preaching. If our preaching has been boring or irrelevant to everyday life, we can be encouraged to know that God has given us a unique set of gifts and resources. We can preach differently.

Palmer Becker is the former teacher of preaching at Hesston (Kan.) College. He currently lives in Kitchener, Ont.

Our preaching needs to result in equipping followers to be disciplined and obedient to Jesus Christ.

Is the sermon

by John Longhurst

I was daydreaming the other Sunday during the sermon and got to thinking about, well, sermons. Specifically, I wondered: In our fast-paced world of Internet, TV, video games, Ipods and a hundred other stimulations and distractions, are sermons the best way to communicate in today's attention-deficient world? Or is the sermon dead?

There was a time when people were accustomed to listening to a 45-minute sermon. Not anymore. These days, many of us have the attention spans of goldfish—literally. Web researcher Ted Selker of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has found that many browsers spend about nine seconds checking a Web page. If they don't find what they are looking for by then, they move on. That's the same attention span as a goldfish.

"If we spend our time flitting from one thing to another on the Web, we can get into a habit of not concentrating," says Selker. "Our attention span gets affected by the way we do things."

Pop culture: But it's not just the Internet that makes us less attentive. Everything today seems to be cut into smaller pieces. As Nancy Miller stated in *Wired Magazine*: "Music, television, games, movies, fashion: We now devour our pop culture the same way we enjoy candy and chips—in conveniently packaged, bite-size nuggets made to be munched easily with increased frequency and maximum speed. This is snack culture—and boy, is it tasty."

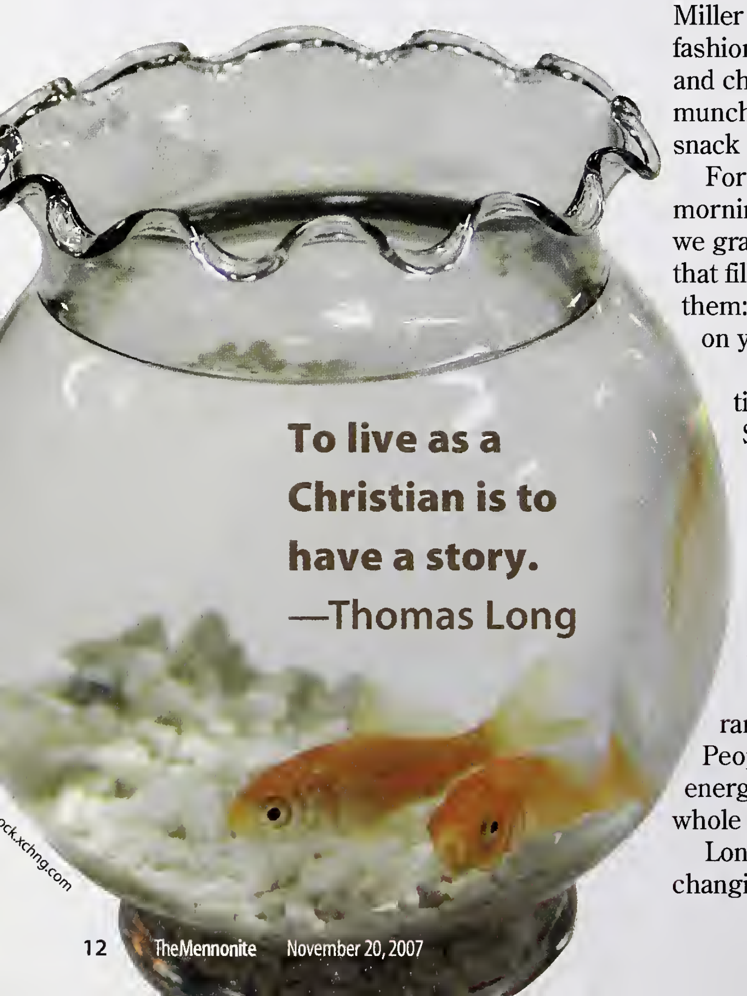
For most people, she says, "media snacking is a way of life. In the morning, we check news and tap out emails on our laptops. At work, we graze all day on videos and blogs … in between are the morsels that fill those whenever minutes, as your mobile phone carrier calls them: a 30-second game on your Nintendo DS, a 60-second webisode on your cell, a three-minute podcast on your MP3 player."

Pity the poor preachers, then, standing up in front of congregations on Sunday morning. How can they compete with all that? Should we give them a break and just declare the sermon dead?

The human voice: "I don't think so," says Thomas Long, professor of preaching at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta. "But I do think that preachers have to work more creatively to get a hearing. There was a time when people were attuned to getting their information from the human voice. Preachers could assume that congregations were at least ready to hear them if they did a good job of preaching. But that's not true anymore."

According to Long, "people today get their information more randomly and episodically. There's no plot line to their world. People's attention is so fragmented, and so attracted by a burst of energy there, a burst of energy here, that making any sense of the whole is a difficult task."

Long says preachers today need to recognize this new reality by changing the way they preach.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To live as a Christian is to have a story.
—Thomas Long

dead? No, but preachers have to be more creative.

Photo provided

Thomas Long

"It's not possible today to preach a traditional sermon with a narrative plot that has sequential sections," he says. "If somebody quits in an early section, the whole thing is lost. My current thinking is that I will no longer start with sentence one and assume a continuity of listening through to the end of the sermon. I think of my sermons in terms of chunks. For each section, I want to be sure to give the congregation the information they need to listen to what I am saying and be able to use it."

Long isn't suggesting that preachers deliver sermons in bullet point pieces. "That approach can end up reinforcing the episodic character of life," he says. "It fails the larger gospel task of giving people a sense that they are part of a larger story."

For Long, the goal of the sermon is still to remind people that the gospel is a master narrative that helps them understand the narrative of their own lives. "To live as a Christian is to have a story," he says, adding that preachers need to adapt to the episodic way people get information-without "losing sight of the bigger story of God's work in the world."

God's bigger plan: Dan Epp-Tiessen doesn't think the sermon is dead today, either. "People today are still yearning for a word from God that gives them a sense of where they fit into God's bigger plan and what God is calling them to do in life," says Tiessen, who teaches homiletics—the art of preaching—at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg.

But, he adds, "sermons today need to be lively, engaging and not drag on" if they are to capture and hold the attention of the congregation. "Preachers need to use language and images that are vivid and lively and that gets people's minds and imaginations going."

Epp-Tiessen, who also served as a pastor at First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., and at Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, also suggests that preachers need to provide more background about the text, people and situations in the Bible. "We can assume the congregation is intelligent, but also that they don't know a lot about the Bible," he says.

Like Long, Epp-Tiessen also agrees that preachers have to be careful not to follow a sequential narrative line that requires listeners to stay attentive throughout the whole sermon—or risk missing everything. "I think of a sermon as a bus ride," he says. "The bus has a destination, but people can get off at multiple points to contemplate something the preacher said, then get back on again."

Both Epp-Tiessen and Long believe the sermon has an important role to play today. "I believe that a

Continued on page 14

Photo provided

Dan Epp-Tiessen

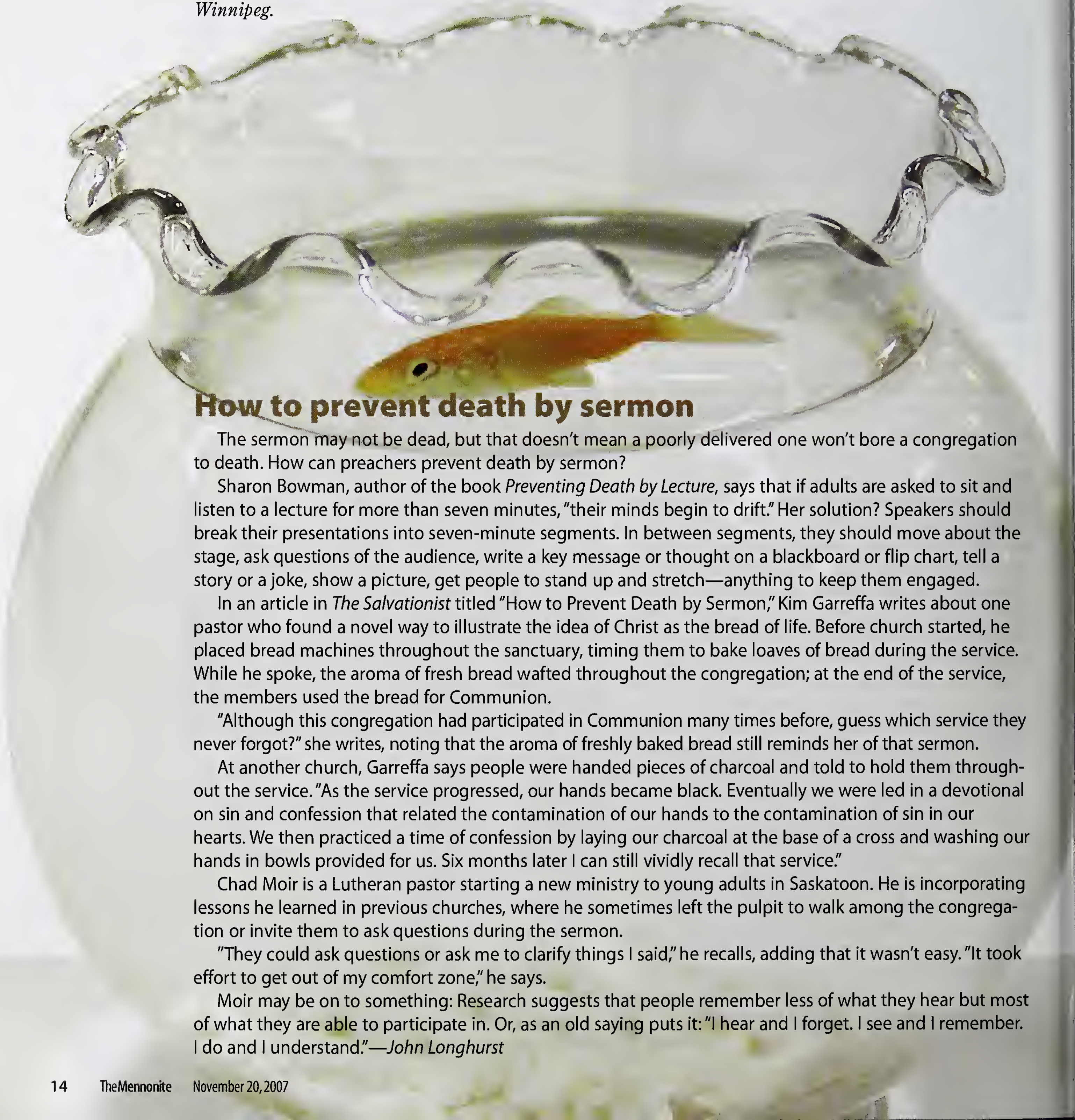
Preachers need to use language and images that are vivid and lively and that gets people's minds and imaginations going. —Dan Epp-Tiessen

Continued from page 13

carefully thought-through sermon has the potential to move people and help them hear God's voice," says Epp-Tiessen. Adds Long: "The community of faith ... is sustained by hearing the voice of God speaking to it. A sermon is a word of God for these people on this day. The preacher stands with one foot in the congregation and the other in Scripture and says: 'This is what I hear God saying to us in this moment.'"

John Longhurst is director of communications and marketing at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg.

Thomas Long is the keynote speaker at CMU's biannual Church in Ministry Seminar, Jan. 14-15, 2008, at the university. The theme of the seminar, which will also feature workshops by Epp-Tiessen and other CMU faculty, is "The Witness of Preaching." Visit www.cmu.ca or call 204-487-3300 for more information.



How to prevent death by sermon

The sermon may not be dead, but that doesn't mean a poorly delivered one won't bore a congregation to death. How can preachers prevent death by sermon?

Sharon Bowman, author of the book *Preventing Death by Lecture*, says that if adults are asked to sit and listen to a lecture for more than seven minutes, "their minds begin to drift." Her solution? Speakers should break their presentations into seven-minute segments. In between segments, they should move about the stage, ask questions of the audience, write a key message or thought on a blackboard or flip chart, tell a story or a joke, show a picture, get people to stand up and stretch—anything to keep them engaged.

In an article in *The Salvationist* titled "How to Prevent Death by Sermon," Kim Garreffa writes about one pastor who found a novel way to illustrate the idea of Christ as the bread of life. Before church started, he placed bread machines throughout the sanctuary, timing them to bake loaves of bread during the service. While he spoke, the aroma of fresh bread wafted throughout the congregation; at the end of the service, the members used the bread for Communion.

"Although this congregation had participated in Communion many times before, guess which service they never forgot?" she writes, noting that the aroma of freshly baked bread still reminds her of that sermon.

At another church, Garreffa says people were handed pieces of charcoal and told to hold them throughout the service. "As the service progressed, our hands became black. Eventually we were led in a devotional on sin and confession that related the contamination of our hands to the contamination of sin in our hearts. We then practiced a time of confession by laying our charcoal at the base of a cross and washing our hands in bowls provided for us. Six months later I can still vividly recall that service."

Chad Moir is a Lutheran pastor starting a new ministry to young adults in Saskatoon. He is incorporating lessons he learned in previous churches, where he sometimes left the pulpit to walk among the congregation or invite them to ask questions during the sermon.

"They could ask questions or ask me to clarify things I said," he recalls, adding that it wasn't easy. "It took effort to get out of my comfort zone," he says.

Moir may be on to something: Research suggests that people remember less of what they hear but most of what they are able to participate in. Or, as an old saying puts it: "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."—*John Longhurst*

O the places you'll go

The priestly role pastors are called upon to play has both privileges and hazards.

by Jim S. Amstutz

I spent Monday morning in courtroom number 2. The man who had killed one of our church members a year earlier was being sentenced. I sat with family and friends as the prosecutor recited the horrific events of that day. The defendant pled guilty, so there was no lengthy trial to endure. Emotions ran high as the widow and her two sons shared their victim-impact statements. On the drive home, I reflected on how pastors get drawn into these incredible life situations and what that means for ministry.

The priestly role pastors are called upon to play has both privileges and hazards. We get called in times of crisis to stand with and beside. Words often fail as they did when I was a campus pastor right out of seminary. A student suffered massive head trauma after falling out of the back of a pickup truck on campus. He was one of my soccer players, and I stood with his brother and parents in the trauma unit. I was way in over my head and wept with everyone else. Thankfully the local pastor of the church the student attended showed up and prayed for us all. The student was taken off life support a few days later, and I witnessed and felt the agony of this loss.

We bring the voice of God to unspeakable situations and it is imperative to remember that it is not about us.

During my first pastorate I drove with the parents and grandparents of an only child to the morgue. He was killed along with his fiancé in an auto accident in the middle of the night, and a deacon and I had gone to the house to be with the parents. As we viewed the body, cries of lament rose to God, and we were all in shock. Somehow I choked through a prayer. Years later, I saw the parents at a church function. The terrible intimacy that we shared bonded us in a way no one ever chooses willingly. We embraced, and we knew.

I visited a young man in prison for a year and a half, serving as his spiritual advisor. The system allowed only his lawyer and me to have face-to-face contact with Jason. His wife, infant daughter and mother could only speak with him over the phone in the visitors lobby through the bullet-proof glass.

Pastors have access to emergency rooms, pre-op waiting rooms and ICU bedsides. We bring the voice of God to unspeakable situations and it is imperative to remember that it is not about us. Paul clarifies in 2 Corinthians 4:7 that "we have this treasure in clay jars." It's never about the jar and always about the treasure. That treasure is a God who knows intimately what it means to suffer loss and heartache. When the college student died, I shared in the chapel service that "in Christ there is no alien sorrow," another way of affirming that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

To be sure, pastors also have access to incredible joy. We are the closest to the bride and groom as they pledge their vows to one other. We lay hands upon those who confess their faith to follow Christ in life through water baptism. We get to hold and bless newborns in the covenant of parent-child dedication. We hold the hands of saints who embrace their death as a peaceful release. These holy moments of grace and tenderness bring balance to the difficult ones, measuring out enough hope to keep despair in check.

The pastor's journey from study to pulpit includes countless excursions through the tragedies and triumphs of life. "O the places you will go," wrote the good Dr. Seuss.

What a burden! What a privilege!

Jim S. Amstutz is co-pastor of Akron, (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

A ministry of recognition

by Urbane Peachey

I sat in the crowded bus depot on a rainy afternoon. The bus was late; the waiting passengers were restless and irritable. Few people spoke, though all obviously noticed an old man in tears. No one tried to connect with his distress except a 2- or 3-year-old child.

The old man may have wanted to be left alone, but this child toddled restlessly around the room, eyeing everyone at a safe distance. She made contact with no one. Then she came closer to the old man, who was leaning forward, his elbows on his knees. The little girl stooped slightly to look into his face. She approached, paused, reached out her hand and wiped tears from his face. The old man smiled gently, with unchanged posture. The waiting room hushed as passengers exchanged glances and recognized the event with quiet "mmms." For a few minutes, the tender reach of kindness turned strangers into a community.

Inquiring, attentive, perceptive and tending, this innocent child can be described as a model caregiver. She did not impose, ask questions, teach, probe or propose. All she did was recognize, accurately and genuinely. Her gesture was eloquence enough; it needed no explanation. All in that room knew subconsciously that the child's reach was not a pretext for some other interest.

One of the urgent developmental tasks for pastors and other caregivers is growing comfortable with another's journey.

Lessons from shepherd imagery in the Bible

At a subconscious level, most of us would be glad to receive this quality of loving care. This is in fact the quality of care suggested in the shepherd passages of the Old and New Testament. The 23rd Psalm and the Good Shepherd of John 10 come to mind at once. Handel's *Messiah* has popularized the evocative lines from Isaiah 40:11: "He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom and gently lead the mother sheep." Micah 5:4 promises a Messianic figure in a time of disaster who "shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord." Ezekiel 34 is less well known, where God is presented at great length as the true shepherd. Images of God's protection abound in the Psalms and the prophets, for example, "a cleft in the rock," "tent" and "refuge." In truth, the images of shepherd culture are pervasive in the Bible.

Jesus claims the shepherd role for himself in John 10:1-18. "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me" (v. 14). To "know" is to recognize, comprehend and understand; it does not denote mastery of knowledge. Peter assigns the shepherd role to the elders of Asia Minor. "Tend the flock of God that is in your charge" (1 Peter 5:2). Tending the flock means to protect, care for, nurture and feed. All sheep, the tame and the wild, thrive on these qualities. Pastors are referred to in the Bible as shepherds who tend the flock.

In contrast to the quality of the child's attentiveness I recall a parishioner's description of a pastor who was not attentive. A certain pastor came to the hospital to visit this person's mother; the family never saw his back side, she said. "He walked in and backed out."

Who knows what may have occupied the pastor—anxiety over facing the unknown, busyness, not wanting to interrupt. In any case, the pastor was out of touch with the family's wish for recognition.

These two anecdotes and the shepherding texts speak of the ministry of recognition. Recognition is an expression of compassion. Compassion means to be with or to suffer with another. Recognition embraces and heals in contrast with instruction or commentary.

One of the urgent developmental tasks for pastors and other caregivers is growing comfortable with another's journey, in ordinary time as well as in times of distress. The caregiver's resistance to the experience of another may be evident in the need to talk about oneself or tell stories that distract from the issue at hand. The skill of recognition while tending the flock also means respecting another's resistance to engage. One parishioner said to me, "I told you I was not ready to talk, and you didn't respect that." The calling to minister and tend the flock does not violate or intrude on the sensitivities of another. Fortunately I had many more experiences in which my attentiveness was affirmed.

In summary, two overarching understandings may be helpful to pastoral caregivers and to search committees looking for pastors with caregiving gifts and skills.

First, attachment and loss are universal and pervasive at all ages. Another way to speak of attachment and loss is to speak of hellos and goodbyes. We readily understand the attachment of children to parents or their attachment to a stuffed toy or a friend. Who has not observed a child distraught over the loss of a pacifier or teddy bear? Attachments in the growing and adult years are no less significant. Attachments that evolve in relationships, school, jobs, homes, friends and fulfillment of dreams transform into our self-image.

The pastor will give significance to the stories or journeys of another person.

Second, the pastor will give significance to the stories or journeys of another person. Individual stories may be private, but they are also relational. Personal stories have much to do with family, church, caregivers, teachers and authority figures:

- stories of how authority was exercised in childhood and youth,
- stories about being parented and nurtured,
- stories from the formative years, of being taught,
- stories of failure and success,
- stories of satisfaction and fulfillment,
- stories of transition,
- stories of loss and grief,
- stories of trauma,
- stories of sickness and health.

The Sunday morning congregation lives hellos and goodbyes every day. Preaching, teaching and worship that is inattentive to hellos and goodbyes feels hollow and alienating. Someone has observed that the congregation cannot really hear the gospel until the preacher has heard or recognized the stories of the people.

Urbane Peachey, a retired pastor and pastoral counselor, lives in Lititz, Pa.

A pastor questions the Bible he loves

Timothy J. Schultz is youth pastor at Clarence Center-Akron Mennonite Church, Akron, N.Y.

Like so many Christians of my generation, my relationship with the Bible began with a rather fundamentalist approach, including memorizing key verses of the King James Version and accepting every word of the text without question or reservation. However, just as friendships remain dormant without deep inquiry and progressive understanding of each other, so, too, our relationship with Scripture should be dynamic, engaging and perhaps even controversial at times.

I love the Word of God and believe it to be divine revelation, yet my approach to it has changed over the years, mostly in the form of opening myself to question what I am reading. Three questions are more challenging for me than others.

> **Just as friendships remain dormant without deep inquiry and progressive understanding of each other, so, too, our relationship with Scripture should be dynamic, engaging and perhaps even controversial at times.**

The first question has to do with accuracy. Does the Bible need to be scientifically and mathematically correct in all instances and still be the Bible? In describing the essence of Scripture, Mennonites tend to use less dogmatic words, such as "reliable" and "trustworthy" rather than the dogmatic terms "infallible" and "inerrant." This seems honest to me. The Bible will never lead us astray, but it was not meant to be a textbook for science or math. For instance, it is accepted by scholars that there are two accounts of creation in Genesis, and the two stories are somewhat different from each other. And in the New Testament, the four Gospels do not correlate entirely. Yet that does not mean that the Gospels or the book of Genesis are not trustworthy or even infallible. They will not fail us.

A second question that I struggle asking has to do with the drama and magical quality of certain biblical events. This question is asked in a danger zone, I admit, but here it is nonetheless: "Is there ever a place for legend—or what Karl Barth called saga—in our reading of Scripture? What I have in mind are examples such as the floating ax head, the coin in the mouth of the fish, Lot's wife turning into a pillar of salt and other fantastic stories. Can a biblical narrative be epical yet present truth or wisdom at the same time? If I discovered that one of those events never literally took place, would I discard my Bible? Absolutely not. The truth behind the stories remain.

The last question is more nagging for one who embraces a theology of peace. **How do we reconcile the God-directed violence of the Old Testament with the peaceful message of Jesus and the pacifism to which we aspire?** Frankly I am horrified by what I read in some of the passages accounting the early history of Israel, in which there was a command to kill men, women and children. Did God really tell them to massacre the people, or did the Israelites, in their limited grasp of God's command, think that God directed them to perform those acts of violence? I wonder about that more than I used to.

I would like to report that all these troubling questions have been answered with satisfaction. They haven't. But I will continue to ask them as I spend time in God's Word. There is safety in refraining from asking questions about the Bible. But I believe that our reading of Scripture can broaden widely if we ask questions about context, linguistic styles and forms. The Bible may not claim to be scientifically accurate in every instance, yet it remains the trusted Word of God, transmitted through fallible humans and Spirit-breathed. Even with questions in tow, the Bible remains my guide for life. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **What's your next stage?**—Michael Ehret
- **Why church history matters**—Nancy R. Heisey
- **Does love really work?**—D. Lowell Nissley

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Mennonite delegation meets the Pope

Mennonite World Conference sends a group from 10 countries to Rome.

When Mennonites from 10 countries spent five days with Catholic Church leaders in Vatican City, each group was interested in learning to know the other better. The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity invited and hosted the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) delegation Oct. 18-23.

The invitation for the visit grew out of the international dialogue between MWC and the Pontifical Council, which took place from 1998 to 2003 and resulted in a 48-page report, "Called Together to be Peacemakers."

This visit provided the opportunity for MWC to take responses to the report as well as concerns about the Catholic Church from MWC member churches around the world to the Pontifical Council.

"When Catholic Church leaders think of Mennonites, they see us as leading Christian bearers of the message of peacemaking and nonviolence, which is at the heart of the gospel," says Larry Miller, MWC general secretary. "Beginning at the least with Pope John Paul II, key Catholic leaders, too, see active peacemaking and nonviolence rooted in Jesus Christ as normative, not disconnected from the gospel, he says.

Pope Benedict XVI reiterated this position in his remarks to the MWC delegation on Oct. 19.

"Since it is Christ himself who calls us to seek Christian unity," he said, "it is entirely right and fitting that Mennonites and Catholics have entered into dialogue in order to understand the reasons for the conflict that arose between us in the 16th century. To understand is to take the first step toward healing."

In Nancy Heisey's remarks to the Pope on behalf of MWC, she spoke of the "great common heritage of faith … [and] the challenges of being God's people in this time" that Mennonites and Catholics share. She noted "the role of the church in matters of mission and evangelism, peace and justice, and a life of discipleship" and "the complexities of relationship between church and society" as other common struggles.

Adult baptism among Catholics is seen as "normative," according to Rev. Augustine DiNoia, Undersecretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and is increasing in frequency, particularly in the global North.

Monsignor John Radano, head of the Western Section of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, credits Anabaptists, together with Baptists, as "the primary proponents of adult baptism." However, he asked, "Do Mennonites accept Catholic adult baptism?" Mennonites and Catholics agreed that questions of baptism require much more discussion.

Citta del Vaticano

Nancy Heisey presents a framed image of Anabaptist martyr Dirk Willems to Pope Benedict XVI.

Conversations around the church and baptism occurred at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Pope Benedict XVI, as Cardinal Ratzinger, headed this powerful department for more than 20 years.

A disappointment for Paulus Widjaja, delegation member and MWC peace commission secretary from Indonesia, was hearing that the Catholic Church calls most other Christian churches outside the Catholic Church "ecclesial communities" but not "churches."

"At the end of our visit, the MWC delegation formulated a document that states what a church is in our belief. Both the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity had stated their openness to receive such a document and to study it," Widjaja said.

The statement will be posted on the MWC Web site, www.mwc-cmm.org.

MWC appointed delegates from the five continental regions, including General Council members Heisey (North America), Mulugeta Zewdie (Africa), Thijn Thijink (Europe), Paulus Widjaja (Asia) and Victor Wall (Latin America).

Delegates from MWC member churches that accepted invitations to send representatives were Lene-Marie Funck-Späth, German Mennonite churches; Ron Penner, Evangelical Mennonite Conference, Canada; and Iris de Leon-Hartshorn, Mennonite Church USA.

Participating MWC staff members were Miller (France) and Helmut Harder (Canada), co-chair, Catholic/MWC International Dialogue.—*Ferne Burkhardt of MWC*

To understand is to take the first step toward healing.
—Pope Benedict XVI

New school building points to recovery

Students in Lhoknga, Indonesia, return to class for the first time post-tsunami.

Dwi Budiarto

Imam, a seventh-grader, is one of about 250 students attending a new junior high school that Mennonite Central Committee helped build in Lhoknga, Indonesia.

> I believe that by constructing schools, it's only going to encourage the community to come back and to recover.
> —Jeff Yoder

People in the town of Lhoknga, Indonesia, celebrated the opening of a junior high school last month that Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) helped rebuild after it was destroyed by the Indian Ocean tsunami.

About 250 students attended an Oct. 25 dedication ceremony before attending classes in their own school for the first time since the tsunami struck the coast of Indonesia's Aceh province on Dec. 26, 2004.

Lhoknga sits along the Indian Ocean, and it suffered some of the tsunami's worst devastation. The wave killed several thousand residents and destroyed most of the town's buildings, according to Jeff Yoder, MCC's tsunami response coordinator in Aceh.

However, the junior high school is now the latest sign that Lhoknga is being rebuilt. Homes, schools and government buildings are springing up in the area cleared by the tsunami.

"Two years ago, you would have seen nothing between the streets and the ocean," Yoder says. "Now, it's dotted with hundreds of houses."

After the tsunami, many families from Lhoknga lived in temporary shelters or moved in with relatives. Their children went to school in tents or attended schools in other towns. Some schools had to hold separate morning and afternoon sessions to accommodate students from Lhoknga and other communities where schools were destroyed.

MCC provided about $1 million to construct and furnish the school in partnership with an Indonesian organization, Center for Education and Development. The school includes 12 classrooms, basketball and volleyball courts, a computer lab, a science lab, an administration building and a library.

Yoder says that the school was planned in consultation with local residents, and it was designed to withstand earthquakes. In the event of another tsunami, which is unlikely, a new tsunami warning system is in place with sirens to tell residents of Lhoknga and other coastal communities to flee inland.

"The community is definitely bouncing back, and that's a real good thing to see," Yoder says. "And I believe that by constructing schools, it's only going to encourage the community to come back and to recover. People are going to feel more comfortable about moving back into the area if they know their children have a school that they can attend."

Dwi Budiarto, an MCC program officer, says that the Lhoknga junior high school had an excellent reputation before the tsunami destroyed its building and killed many students and staff members, including the headmaster.

Now the school has a new headmaster and many new, first-time teachers—and the people of Lhoknga are hoping they will have an excellent junior high school again.

At the dedication ceremony, a local government leader praised the building but noted that the school's staff and students would ultimately be responsible for making the school a success.

"People are really eager to see this school come back," Budiarto says.—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee*

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Baptism and a new life in Hong Kong

Staff at Cheung Chau Christian Center minister to immigrant women.

Mey Idawaty Aruan

Andy Wade, left, and Nora Iwarat, right, baptize Winnie Moyco Chan.

For at least one Hong Kong immigrant, new life begat new life. On Aug. 14, nine months after she was baptized in the ocean waters off of the coast of Cheung Chau Island, Hong Kong, Winnie Moyco Chan gave birth to a son. Zane Austin Chan's arrival was the culmination of years of searching—for happiness and for God.

Chan, a Filipina living in Hong Kong after marrying a Chinese man, had laid her life on the line several years previously. Though she had grown up Catholic and been baptized as a Mormon, she never felt that she understood either faith. From the end of a Cheung Chau Island park bench, she proclaimed that she would go to church if God would give a child to her and Ken, her husband of 16 years.

On the other end of the bench was Nora Iwarat, a fellow Filipina who serves at Cheung Chau Christian Center, a ministry through the Conference of Mennonite Churches in Hong Kong, supported by Mennonite Mission Network, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Mennonite Church Canada Witness, Integrated Mennonite Church of the Philippines and PIPKA, the mission arm of the Indonesian Mennonite Church.

The three ministers at the Cheung Chau center relate to the immigrant women who serve as domestic workers. Chan became a regular at the Center's Tuesday Night Fellowship meeting for people wanting to learn about God.

Though she explored, Chan still did not believe, at least until she conceived. In August 2006, Chan and Ken announced that they were expecting their first child after an in vitro embryonic transfer. (Chan has a 22-year-old son from a previous marriage.) Chan's mood and her faith were buoyant for about two months.

She miscarried in October.

Chan says she did not know how to react. In her anger, she blamed God. Iwarat was sure Chan would turn from God. The promise of the child, after all, had been broken. If anything, their child's death made Chan more resolute.

"I thought, It's just a test from (God)," she wrote. "I asked forgiveness to the Lord for blaming him and asked for strength to accept it and go on with my life."

In November 2006, Chan held her breath as Iwarat and Andy Wade, who works in Hong Kong through Mennonite Mission Network, dipped her beneath the ocean waters. During her testimony, she quoted from 1 Corinthians of God's promise not to test followers beyond their strength and that God's grace is sufficient for any trial. Rather than being discouraged by her unsuccessful attempts to become a mother, Chan became more resolute in her faith and offered testimonies to friends.

Iwarat said these testimonies are important within a population of immigrant workers who are Muslims or Catholic but not actively part of the church and looking for friends.

Cheung Chau Christian Center essentially is a ministry of friendship and hospitality, says Iwarat, who serves on the island through Integrated Mennonite Church of the Philippines with Mey Idawaty Aruan, sent through PIPKA, and Susan Excelby of England. Most of the immigrant domestic workers come from the Philippines or Indonesia, allowing Iwarat, a Filipina, and Aruan, an Indonesian, to better minister to their peers.

Immigrant domestic workers make up nearly 3 percent of Hong Kong's population. Most come from either the Philippines or Indonesia, and often common employment practices force them back home.—*Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network*

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Noah Schrock took a stand at Fort Meade

A Choice Books stand displays where the conscientious objector suffered.

In December 2006, the manager of the Army and Air Force Exchange store at Fort Meade, Md., ordered a display from Choice Books, a 45-year-old inter-Anabaptist book evangelism ministry.

Ivan Schrock, Choice Books Sales and Marketing, received the request and forwarded the news to his brother Eldon Schrock, operations manager for Choice Books of Northern Virginia. Eldon noted in his email reply, "I believe this is where our grandfather was held as a young man for being a conscientious objector." And indeed it was.

On April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany and joined the international forces already fighting in World War I. In June, all young men age 21 to 28 were required to register. Among them was Ivan and Eldon's grandfather, Noah Schrock. On the first day of January 1918, the 24-year-old Amish man was called to go to Camp Meade.

During the following days at Camp Meade, Schrock and other recruits, including Mennonites and Brethren who objected to military service, chose not to report to training drills. Consequently, army officers nailed their barracks windows open in frigid, near-zero degree weather. In addition, these young conscientious objectors (COs) were not given meals for three days. On the third day, higher ranking officers heard of their fate, and the group was moved to another location.

"Soon we were on our way—about 130 of us," Schrock wrote home about the move. "I thought of the children of Israel. The soldiers would holler at us and say we had a good home in the cold barracks."

Then one evening, the group of pacifists was called to go and get their army uniforms.

Schrock said, "I was worried but thought, The good Lord will take care of me. The other COs all went in and got their uniforms. They kept on saying, 'What are you going to do? They will treat you pretty rough if you don't take a uniform.' I was the last to go into the office. The officer looked at me and said, 'You don't look like the others.' He opened my coat and looked all over me. Then he began to ask questions. He said, 'I believe you are a church member.' He asked where I lived and how many were in my family, how often we have church, and how many preachers we have. He asked a lot of questions. Then he said, 'I don't believe you want a uniform. Let me go into the next room and check with the boss.' When he came out, he said, 'I don't believe this man wants a uniform. We'll have to pass on him.' "

I thought of the children of Israel. The soldiers would holler at us and say we had a good home in the cold barracks. —Noah Schrock

When Schrock came out without a uniform, his fellow COs wanted to know what he told the officer. Schrock replied, "He did the talking. I only answered his questions."

Excerpts from Noah Schrock's letters read: "I hope you can get the rest of the boys in the church exempted so they don't need to come down here. I think we should have objected to registration. I think that was one step in military service. … I don't know what they intend to do next. They would not allow us to have church at least yesterday. The Dunkards held a church service, and the officers gave them 10 minutes to close. They put us under guard. …We hear the president was or is going to make a decision what to do with us … we hope there is some higher power ruling over us yet … they said there should be no trouble if we agree to furnish 10 men in the kitchen a day. If not, we will not get anything but bread and water. It was a pretty hard proposition to decide whether to work in the kitchen or take the food."

But there were moments of encouragement. The COs were told that General John J. Pershing, a high-ranking general, was going to visit the camp and wanted to talk to them.

Pershing is the only person, while still alive, to rise to the highest rank ever held in the United States Army—General of the Armies, which is equivalent only to the posthumous rank of George Washington.

The young men didn't know what to expect and worried they would be pressured to change their minds. But the general told them they were doing the right thing and tried to assure them they would make it through.

During his time at Camp Meade, Schrock said that the higher the rank of authority, the gentler the army officers treated the COs.

Nearly 90 years after this young Amish man was uprooted from his family and church community, Noah Schrock's grandson Ivan Schrock delivered a Choice Books display to Fort Meade.

In the year following, Choice Books has sold more than 1,600 Christian and inspirational books from this display. At times the display is stocked with the book entitled *Don't Throw in the Towel* by Noah Schrock's son Simon Schrock, author and executive director of Choice Books of Northern Virginia. In the place where Noah suffered for his opposition to fighting in World War I stands a Choice Books display.—*E. Dale Mast of Choice Books*

National Guardsman now in seminary

Dan Seifert, 42, found he 'couldn't carry a weapon' while in the military.

Shortly after the events of 9/11, Dan Seifert joined the National Guard. The former Air Force technician didn't expect that this move would create a theological crisis, but at age 42 he was a different person.

"I didn't really think about it," says Seifert, a United Methodist student at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va. "I was interested in attending seminary. I thought, The Army paid for my first education; they could pay for graduate education as well."

"I had sort of a vague sense of patriotism that a lot of people felt at the time," he says. "But soon after entering the National Guard, I realized I couldn't carry a weapon and I'd never bring myself to kill another person."

When Seifert joined, most soldiers in the National Guard were deployed quickly to work in what he called "force protection"—working to beef up security at high-risk military sites.

"Almost immediately I was sent into a tailspin. I was in the chaplain corps, but you have to find a deployable chaplain who's willing to mentor you, and I didn't find one immediately available," he says. "So I was being trained to work at one of these sites."

Fortunately, a senior chaplain found Seifert, and he was allowed to work stateside in a chaplain team in the D.C. and Baltimore area.

"Chaplaincy work was interesting. You do a lot of listening with soldiers," Seifert says. "I was awarded honors because I was able to identify several suicidal soldiers and help them get the proper treatment."

But underneath, Seifert was still uncomfortable with the military language and culture. "I didn't realize how much I had changed since the days I enlisted in the Air Force," he says. After his year of deployment, Seifert enrolled in seminary.

"Don Yoder, the admissions counselor, told me that often people come to seminary with a particular issue that they need to work out," Seifert says. "This became a major issue for me."

"I realized military service was incompatible with my life as a Christian," says Seifert, "But I had also decided that I would try to endure the remainder of my military contract."

Seifert continued in the National Guard for five more years, then another crisis arose.

"I finally knew I needed to do something when orders to Iraq were coming down all over my brigade, and I knew my unit in Fredericksburg would eventually be called up," Seifert says. "It wasn't that I wasn't willing to go, but I realized I had to be honest with myself about who I was and my calling to live peaceably.

"I had to be honest with the military and let them know that I wasn't going to kill," he says. "I looked carefully at Scripture and at myself and at the United Methodist Church tradition."

Seifert explored this issue in a paper for a course in Christian ethics.

"In my study I discovered that the United Methodist confession of faith says, 'War and bloodshed are contrary to the teaching and spirit of Christ,'" says Seifert. "I discovered that living peaceably was part of discipleship, and that was an affirmation for me."

Seifert began the legal process to be discharged as a conscientious objector in February. He wrote a required 15-page application and went through all proper channels.

He was advised by his legal counsel that it could take 12-18 months for the entire process. He received an honorable discharge in just seven months.

"I have been shaped by the Christian narrative of living peaceably," says Seifert. "I see my choice not so much as a stance, pacifism, or as a reaction, nonviolence, but more as a virtue to be lived out thoroughly. It's not just about military service; it's about being at peace with your spouse and making peace with people in your community."

Seifert is a member of Otterbein United Methodist Church in Harrisonburg. He is in his final year of seminary, working on a master of divinity degree.—*Laura Lehman Amstutz of Eastern Mennonite Seminary*

Dan Seifert

It's not just about military service; it's about being at peace with your spouse and making peace with people in your community.
—Dan Seifert

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High schoolers carry Bibles everywhere

Bethany students find what it means to be Christian in mainstream culture.

Kevin Miller

Bethany Christian School junior Elyse Morgan, left, and Jodi Stutzman, right, read their Bibles in the hallway during a lunch break.

> The sad thing is that we shouldn't have to carry around a Bible to be noticeably different from mainstream culture.
> —Jacob Gerig

To carry a Bible around school all the time is unusual. To do so in public places, even more so. But for one week in October, J.D. Smucker, Bethany Christian School's vocal music teacher, asked choir members in grades 10-12 to do just that: carry their Bibles with them everywhere—in and out of school.

Smucker's inspiration for this assignment came through his participation in Bethany's current strategic planning process and his engaging with questions such as, What do we wish to nurture in our students at Bethany? What does it mean to be Christ-centered?

"The connection between music and the experience of carrying the Bible is directly related to how we should talk about and live out our faith,"Smucker says. "I want students to think about living their faith openly and how that extends to their meeting new people or expressing themselves in singing songs of faith."

At the end of the week-long assignment, students shared about their experiences. Smucker, who has taught at Bethany for 20 years, continues to be impressed with insights of students as they reflect on how they express their faith.

Many students said that carrying a Bible with them was a catalyst for conversations with others. At times adults would affirm them for carrying the Bible and encourage them to read it more often. Junior Mary Roth and some of her friends decided to read from their Bibles before eating lunch in the cafeteria.

Many students found that carrying the Bible reminded them to spend time with God in prayer. Senior Simone Sommers is committed to keeping a Bible in her locker as a reminder to focus on God each day. Sophomore Emily Grimes says, "Sometimes we unintentionally forget about our faith. We need to intentionally work our faith into our everyday lives so we don't forget. That is one reason I attend Bethany."

Students also experienced some tension with mainstream culture. When sophomore Cassie Sweetser took her Bible to a party, the host parents jokingly asked if she was going to have a Bible study instead of a party. Cassie says, "I laughed, but it made me think how sometimes we put our faith away for another time." Senior Jena Schwartzentruber felt comfortable carrying her Bible around school but noticed interesting glances when she carried her Bible to a soccer game and to a funeral. She says she now realizes "how easy it can be for Christians to blend in with our surroundings."

Sophomore Jacob Gerig says, "The sad thing is that we shouldn't have to carry around a Bible to be noticeably different from mainstream culture." Senior Moon Shik Woo, who notes that carrying the Bible was like wearing a nametag labeling him as a Christian. "If we show people that we are Christian by our actions, then we can deliver the message that we are different without needing to carry the Bible around," he says.

Similar to the time when Mennonites dressed differently than people in the surrounding culture, Smucker says, "The students ... experienced a constant reminder of being different and the need to think each day how we are called to share our faith with others. Singing in a Mennonite high school choir provides students with the opportunity to share this message of faith in many settings. But ultimately students must consider how they express this as individuals and as members of their community."—*Kevin Miller of Bethany Christian School*

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Pets celebrated and blessed at church

Boulder (Colo.) Mennonite Church holds its first Animal Blessings Service.

Attendance was different on Sunday morning, Oct. 14, at Boulder (Colo.) Mennonite Church.

In addition to the 90 people, about a dozen animals attended, including dogs, a tortoise and a snake. Dozens of photos of pets and previous pets who died, as well as stuffed animals, also joined.

Lani Abbott, a member whose idea it was to hold this special service in the congregation, says, "Members of the church and the neighborhood community were invited to bring animal companions to celebrate the wholeness of God's creation in worship with other living beings."

Scripture, hymns, readings and the sermon celebrated God's creation of animals.

Members participated in an Animal Blessing Procession at the end of the service, in which guardians with pets or photos came up on stage to share their pets' names and what they have received from their pets.

They listed the ways these animals bless their lives: companionship, friendship, stress relief, physical contact, attentiveness to different details of life, memories of a deceased family member, sleep companionship for a child, exercise partner, demonstrating unconditional love, subjects of children's creative play and stories, lessons about loving, letting go and more.

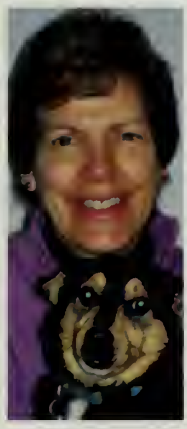
Each pet and guardian was offered a prayer of blessing that God's love continue to live in their relationship.

Becky Eeds and one of her dogs, Ella, served as worship leaders for the service.

Eeds, a member of Boulder Mennonite, has worked serving animals at the Humane Society Boulder Valley for 15 years.

"I know what a blessing animals are in my daily life and work, and it was good to feel that the church also recognized the connection that we have with animals," Eeds says. "Having Ella worship lead with me was very special. I always feel more comfortable with a dog by my side."

"One of the gifts of the morning was seeing so many of our children share with such joy and love about the animals that are a part of their family lives," says Karen Cox, pastor at Boulder. "I suspect an Animal Blessing Service will become an annual celebration."—*Boulder Mennonite Church*



Becky Eeds and Ella

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This summer Jackie put her faith and education to work in an MDS internship in Diamond, Louisiana. She plans to volunteer full time with MDS or another service organization when she completes her Hesston degree.

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"For the Record" lists obituaries for Mennonite Church USA members who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6052. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

WORKERS

Bryant, Leonard, was licensed as elder at Way Thru Christ Ministry, Chester, Pa., on Sept. 16.

Carter, Dwight, was licensed as elder at Way Thru Christ Ministry, Chester, Pa., on Sept. 16.

Freeman, Otis, was licensed as elder at Way Thru Christ Ministry, Chester, Pa., on Sept. 16.

Gibson, DaQuan T., was licensed as elder at Way Thru Christ Ministry, Chester, Pa., on Sept. 16.

Godino, Joseph E., was licensed as elder at Way Thru Christ Ministry, Chester, Pa., on Sept. 16.

Guengerich, Ron, begins a term as pastoral team leader at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on Dec. 1.

Harnish, David L., was licensed as associate pastor of administration at Marietta Community Chapel, Marietta, Pa., and as Mission Intern Director at Eastern Mennonite Missions on Sept. 23.

Hollinger, Clyde M., was installed as lead pastor at Millport Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa., on Aug. 26.

Kreider, Beverly R., was licensed as associate pastor of spiritual formation at Marietta Community Chapel, Marietta, Pa., on Sept. 23.

Martin, Gary, concluded his work as transitional pastor at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on Sept. 23.

Michaels, John, was licensed as youth pastor at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, North Lawrence, Ohio, on Oct. 21.

Rice, Howard H., was installed as lead pastor at Bethlehem Community Fellowship, Bethlehem, Pa., on June 3.

Showell, Charles E. Jr., was licensed as elder at Way Thru Christ Ministry, Chester, Pa., on Sept. 16.

Smith, Baron K., was licensed toward ordination as lead pastor at Latter Rain House of Restoration, Claymont, Del., on Sept.16.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Beach, Nolan Wade, Nov. 2, to Jeremy and Diann Grove Beach, Harrisonburg, Va.

Bergey, Carter James, Sept. 16, to Phil and Jennifer Bender Bergey, Chesapeake, Va.

Bryant, Kendra Leigh, Oct. 14, to Jonathan and Becky Hoosier Bryant, Waynesboro, Va.

Creighton, Reiss Emery, Oct. 14, to Eric and Kellie Aeschliman Creighton, Stryker, Ohio.

Gingrich, Reuben Scott, Oct. 31, to Dustin and Sarah Frye Gingrich, Puerto Montt, Chile.

Hamilton, Tegan Jenee, Nov. 1, to Tyler and Terri Jo Henson Hamilton, Wauseon, Ohio.

Headings, Ethan Cole, Sept. 29, to Bruce and Rachel Smith Headings, LaCrosse, Wis.

Histand, Shane Brian, Oct. 29, to Brian and Stephanie Histand, Perkasie, Pa.

Huddle, Lila Jean, Sept. 29, to Jason and Sally Gingerich Huddle, Denver.

Johnson, Cora Lorene, Oct. 24, to Darren and Andrea Thiessen Johnson, Inman, Kan.

Kalvoda, Kaylee Dawn, Sept. 21, to Wayne and Joan Friesen Kalvoda, Glenvil, Neb.

Kauffman, Simon Daniel, Aug. 31, to Ryan and Valerie Smith Kauffman, Bellefontaine, Ohio.

Miller, Makenzie Marie, Aug. 23, to Nathaniel and Breanne Miller, Archbold, Ohio.

Ochoa, Robert Gabriel Brenneman, Oct. 7, to Robert and Gaby Ochoa Brenneman, South Bend, Ind.

Peters, Zachary John, Aug. 18, to Brian and Heather Wilcox Peters, Aurora, Neb.

Ressler, Josiah James, Oct. 20, to Alan and Pamela Roemer Ressler, Honey Brook, Pa.

Rohrer, Lily Virginia, Oct. 19, to Casey and Rachel Mellott Rohrer, Springs, Pa.

Shelly, Brooklyn Kate, Oct. 19, to Jason and Renita Bergey Shelly, Telford, Pa.

Wheeler, Benjamin Micah, Sept. 17, to David and Jana Goering Wheeler, Hudson, Mich.

MARRIAGES

Beck/Hostetler: Brenna Beck, Valparaiso, Ind., and Jason Hostetter, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 14, at Taltree Arboretum, Valparaiso.

Bock/Thiessen: Crystal Bock, Buhler, Kan., and Jacob Thiessen, Inman, Kan., Oct. 20, in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Cummins/King: Sherry Cummins, Valparaiso, Ind., and Byron King, Kouts, Ind., Sept. 29, at Church of Christ Vale.

Detwiler/Yoder: Charlene Detwiler, Uniontown, Ohio, and Mert Yoder, Uniontown, Oct. 27, at the old King Church location, Uniontown.

Myers/Stoltzfus: Matthew Myers, Lebanon, Pa., and Amanda Stoltzfus, Parkesburg, Pa., Oct. 20, at East Petersburg Mennonite Church, East Petersburg.

Norwood/Troxell: Cynthia Marie Norwood, Eureka, Mo., and Tadd Anthony Troxell, Goshen, Ind., Sept. 29, at Fox Run Golf Course, Eureka.

Rice/Rupp: Nick Rice, Pettisville, Ohio, and Valerie Rupp, Wauseon, Ohio, Nov. 3, at North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon.

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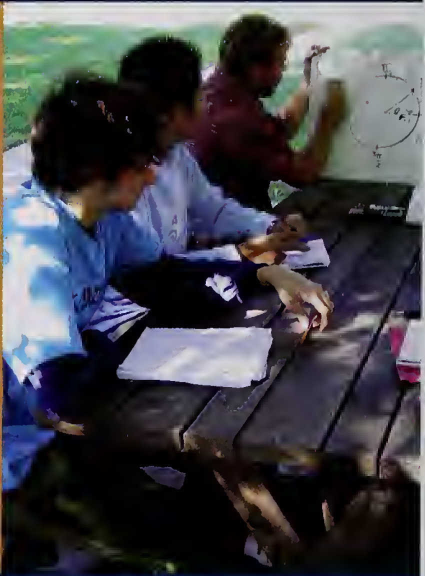

DEATHS

Alderfer, Naomi Freed Derstine, 86, Hatfield, Pa., died Sept. 25. Spouse: Warren Hendricks Alderfer. Parents: Harvey H. and Katie Clemens Freed Derstine. Children: Rachel Hinz, Rhoda Kauffman, Glenda Moyer, David; 11 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 29 at Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield.

Eick, Norman A., 84, Chesapeake, Va., died Sept. 23. Spouse: Mary Eick. Parents: Edward and Ida Eick. Children: Sidney N., Lacinda M. Mast; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 27 at Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church, Chesapeake.

Hartzler, Donald B., 89, West Liberty, Ohio, died Oct. 21. Spouse: Barbara Birky Hartzler. Parents: Harry and Eva Welday Hartzler. Children: David, Judith Steider, Evelyn Hostetler; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 28 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Huebert, Milton H., 80, Henderson, Neb., died Aug. 7. Spouse: Elvera Siebert Huebert. Parents: Henry H. and Anna Friesen Huebert. Children: Sheryl Leaman, Bonnie Kramer, Wanda Harford, Glenn, LaDonna Wedel, Melanie Cook; 22 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 11 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Hofer, Barbara G. Hofer, 96, Freeman, S.D., died Oct. 23. Spouse: Edward A. Hofer (deceased). Parents: Jacob S. and Sarah Glanzer Hofer. Children: Norma Hofer, Richard, Roger, Elaine Glanzer; 10 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 27 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Janzen, Walter, 80, Henderson, Neb., died Sept. 11. Spouse: Elva Siebert Janzen. Parents: Jacob D. and Helena Peters Janzen. Children: Royce, Rebecca Dolezal, Gary; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 14 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Keefer, Evelyn M. Pence, 81, Fort Wayne, Ind., died Oct. 11. Spouse: Franklin Keefer (deceased). Parents: Richard and Nina Pence. Children: John Simpson, James Keefer, Robert Keefer, Richard Keefer; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 13 at D.O. McComb and Sons Maplewood Funeral Home, Fort Wayne.

Martin, Anna B., 87, Lancaster, Pa., died Oct. 16. Parents: Samuel L. and Ada M. Martin. Funeral: Oct. 20 at Landis Homes Retirement Community, Lititz, Pa.

Pankratz, Elmer W., 79, Inola, Okla., died Sept. 26. Spouse: Elvera Jantz Pankratz. Parents: Benjamin and Mary Hiebert Pankratz. Children: Dwight, Susan Landers, Mary Ann Beasley, Anita Schumer; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 30 at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola.

Preheim, Dorothy Ann, 59, Freeman, S.D., died Oct. 17. Parents: Lynn and Ethel Waltner Preheim. Funeral: Oct. 20 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Schloneger, Amy A. Wengerd, 87, Louisville, Ohio, died Oct. 20. Spouse: John A. Schloneger (deceased). Parents: Alva and Sarah Sommers Wengerd. Children: Norma Erb, Gerald, Elvin, Loyal, Wesley, Rodney, Charlene Parrish; 28 grandchildren; 42 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 23 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

Zehr, Melvin D., 84, Fisher, Ill., died Oct. 22. Spouse: Edith Heiser Zehr. Spouse: Mary Roszhart Zehr (deceased). Parents: Daniel A. and Katie E. Zehr. Step-children: Cleona Swartzendruber, Carol Nunn, John Heiser; four step-grandchildren; three step-great grandchildren. Children: Paul, Tom, Philip, Rebecca Moyer; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 27 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher.

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Menno Haven Retirement Communities, Chambersburg, Pa., invites applications for the position of ***full-time chaplain*** to be added to the present Pastoral Care staff of three chaplains. Menno Haven is a growing, continuing-care retirement community with 1,100 residents and 550 staff members spread over three neighboring campuses. Candidates should be ordained and credentialed as a Mennonite minister, with pastoral or chaplaincy experience and Clinical Pastoral Education training. Contact Ray Geigley, executive manager for pastoral care services at rgeigley@mennohaven.org or 717-261-2512 for job description and further information.

Singles retreat at **Spruce Lake**, Nov. 30-Dec. 2: Explore what it means to "Live a Legacy" as a single person. Geared for out-of-college singles. Call 800-822-7505; www.sprucelake.org.

Salem Mennonite Church, located near the growing community of Tofield, Alta. (45 minutes southeast of Edmonton), is seeking a ***lead pastor*** to minister to our congregation of 125 people. The successful candidate will have previous pastoral experience and/or a bachelor of theology degree or equivalent. Compensation will be commensurate with qualifications. Interested people should forward their resumés to: Carla Fendelet, secretary, Salem Mennonite Church, Box 56, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0; fax 780-662-0106; email cgfen@telus.net.

Tabor College seeks ***full-time mathematics faculty*** starting August 2008. Doctorate preferred. Must have a passion for teaching, mentoring and advising undergraduate majors, affirm Tabor distinctives as an Anabaptist Evangelical Christian college and articulate personal Christian commitment. Complete position listings at http://www.tabor.edu. Send a letter of interest to lawrencer@tabor.edu.

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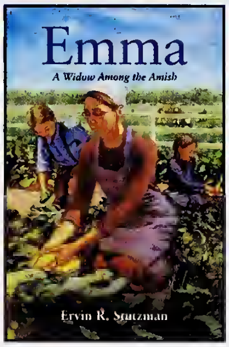

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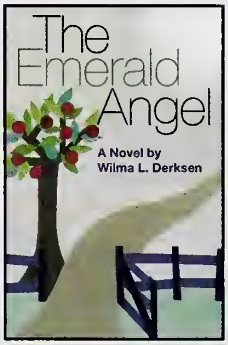

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Employment: ***Full-time director*** of **Camp Mennoscah**, a year-round prairie camp and retreat center owned by Western District Conference; open Jan. 15, 2008. Apply by contacting conference minister Dorothy Nickel Friesen at 316-283-6300 or wdc@mennowdc.org to obtain application packet. Position remains open until director is named.

Swamp Mennonite Church seeks a passionate ***full-time senior pastor*** to focus on preaching, pastoral care and equipping leaders. SMC is a Christ-centered, welcoming church (regular attendance of 140) that is a fellowship of believers committed to serving our community, living in peace and making Anabaptist/Mennonite faith and worship relevant in the Quakertown, Pa., area. Seminary training is required. Interested people should email the pastoral search committee at swampsec@fast.net.

Pomerene Hospital, located in Millersburg, Ohio, is looking for a ***full-time*** and a ***part-time CNM*** to join an established OB/GYN practice in the heart of the largest Amish community in the world. Will practice at both an OB/GYN office and at an Amish-operated CNM clinic and birth center. We offer an attractive compensation and benefit program. Please contact conniep@pomerenehospital.org.

The Garden Chapel of Victory Gardens, N.J., of Franconia Conference is seeking a ***part-time, bivocational pastor***. The congregation is located in a small, integrated community, 40 miles west of New York City. The congregation reflects the multiethnicity of its community. Responsibilities include preaching, teaching, congregational and community ministry. For further information please contact Ertell Wigham at ertellw@fmconline.org.

Executive director: **Fairview Fellowship Home** in Fairview, Okla., seeks an ***executive director*** (with an administrator's license) to lead its 150-resident and $5 million-budget campus. Reporting to the board of directors, the new executive will provide leadership to this Mennonite Brethren-affiliated campus with 126 health-care beds and 32 independent living units. Submit inquiries to Caryn Howell: MHS Alliance, 234 S. Main St., Suite 1, Goshen, IN 46526, 574-537-8736 or carynhowell@msn.com.

Eastern Mennonite University seeks qualified candidates for the position of ***provost***. The provost serves as chief academic officer of the university as well as supervises numerous administrative offices. The responsibilities of the provost include providing leadership and vision for internal functions of the university and developing cooperative relationships among university programs, departments and divisions. The provost assists the president in representing the university to church, community and educational constituent groups. Qualifications include earned doctorate; successful teaching, leadership, administrative and interpersonal experience at a college or university level; membership in or willingness to affiliate with an Anabaptist congregation; and knowledge of the Mennonite church and an understanding of and commitment to the mission of Mennonite/Anabaptist higher education. To apply send a letter of application, curriculum vitae and three references to Loren Swartzendruber, President, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; email lorens@emu.edu. For more information, visit our Web site: www.emu.edu/humanresources.

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Books on Jesus, culture and literature

Gordon Houser

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

Christmas is coming, and it's time either to write out your list of books you want or buy gifts for your friends and family. One can hope, right? Here are a few to consider.

Jesus: Two recent books (out of a growing literature) take a different approach from one another. *Recovering Jesus: The Witness of the New Testament* by Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld (Brazos Press, 2007, $22.99) is an outstanding introduction to the study of Jesus in the New Testament. A Mennonite scholar, Neufeld uses maps, bibliographies and sidebars with his clear prose. He addresses difficult questions with equanimity and a pastoral call to discipleship. This would make an excellent, though extensive study for a Sunday school class.

In *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2006, $24.95), Amy Jill-Levine, a New Testament scholar who is Jewish, claims that "Jesus' words are too familiar, too domesticated, too stripped of their initial edginess and urgency. Only when heard through first-century Jewish ears can their original edginess and urgency be recovered." Levine's insights help us hear Jesus in a new way, and her approach is amicable and humorous. "The point of interfaith conversation," she writes, "is not to convert the person across the table, but it is also not to abdicate one's own theology for the sake of reaching agreement." Readers will not agree with or like all that she writes, but they will learn much. And she's fun to read.

Culture: One of the more influential theological books from the middle of the last century was H. Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture*. A recent critique of that book is *Rethinking Christ and Culture: A Post-Christendom Perspective* by Craig A. Carter (Brazos Press, 2006, $19.99). The main problem with Niebuhr's book, Carter writes, is that it presupposes the existence of Christendom, which essentially sees Western civilization as Christian. The "basic calculus of Christendom thinking," Carter writes, is this: "a few compromises for the sake of great influence on the wider society." Mennonites will not find all this new, but Carter's warnings about sacrificing discipleship for relevance and power are useful.

Culture Matters: A Call for Consensus on Christian Cultural Engagement by T.M. Moore (Brazos Press, 2007, $16.99) takes a different, less academic approach to culture. Moore challenges Christians to learn "how to take what is good in contemporary culture, reclaim and retool it, and put it to work in a Christian framework for the sake of forging a new culture." He considers historical examples of Christians doing this, including Celtic Christians, Calvin, Abraham Kuyper and Polish poet Czeslaw Milosz. While I disagree with the weight he gives to developing distinctly Christian cultural forms, I appreciate his emphasis on cultural awareness and engagement.

Literature: *In the Light of Christ: Writings in the Western Tradition* by Lucy Beckett (Ignatius Press, 2006, $21.95) is an accessible survey of more than 40 writers from ancient to modern times that combines literary and theological insight. While her Catholic bias and adoration of Augustine are evident, Beckett shows how God's truth and goodness shine through many of the important writings of the Western tradition. The breadth and depth of her reading is astonishing.

The Book of Buechner: A Journey Through His Writings by Dale Brown (Westminster John Knox Press, 2006, $24.95) is a treat for Buechner fans. Brown offers in-depth analysis of Buechner's fiction, from *A Long Day's Dying*, his first novel, to *The Storm*, while including references to his other writings. This will likely be the definitive treatment of Buechner's fiction. Brown delves into the literary aspects of the works but focuses also on the theological.

FILMS

Michael Clayton (R) is a smart, well-written film about corporate conspiracy that mostly avoids the usual diatribe in such films. In the title role, George Clooney plays a fixer at a high-powered New York law firm. His good friend Arthur Edens (Tom Wilkinson) goes off the deep end and reverts from defending a corporation from a $3 billion class-action lawsuit to proving their guilt. Meanwhile, Michael, an overworked, divorced dad, is dealing with a $75,000 debt, a brother in rehab and a gambling addiction. The acting is superb and the pacing near-perfect. The opening monologue, on the edge (or over the edge) of sanity, is masterful.

DVDS

No End in Sight (NR) is a comprehensive look at the Bush administration's conduct of the Iraq war and its occupation of the country. In a thorough, nonideological way, using multiple interviews (though several principal players refused to be interviewed), the film shows the incredible incompetence, ignorance and deceit of administration officials in not only going to war but in ruining any chance of rebuilding the country peaceably. One of many examples of far-reaching stupidity was dismantling the entire Iraqi military, which led to the insurgency that continues to take many lives. History will not be kind to the Bush presidency.

> "The beauty of great writing, which is one among many imperfect reflections of the beauty of God, is for anyone to love; it does not belong to academics or specialists any more than the truth of God belongs to theologians." —*In the Light of Christ: Writings in the Western Tradition*

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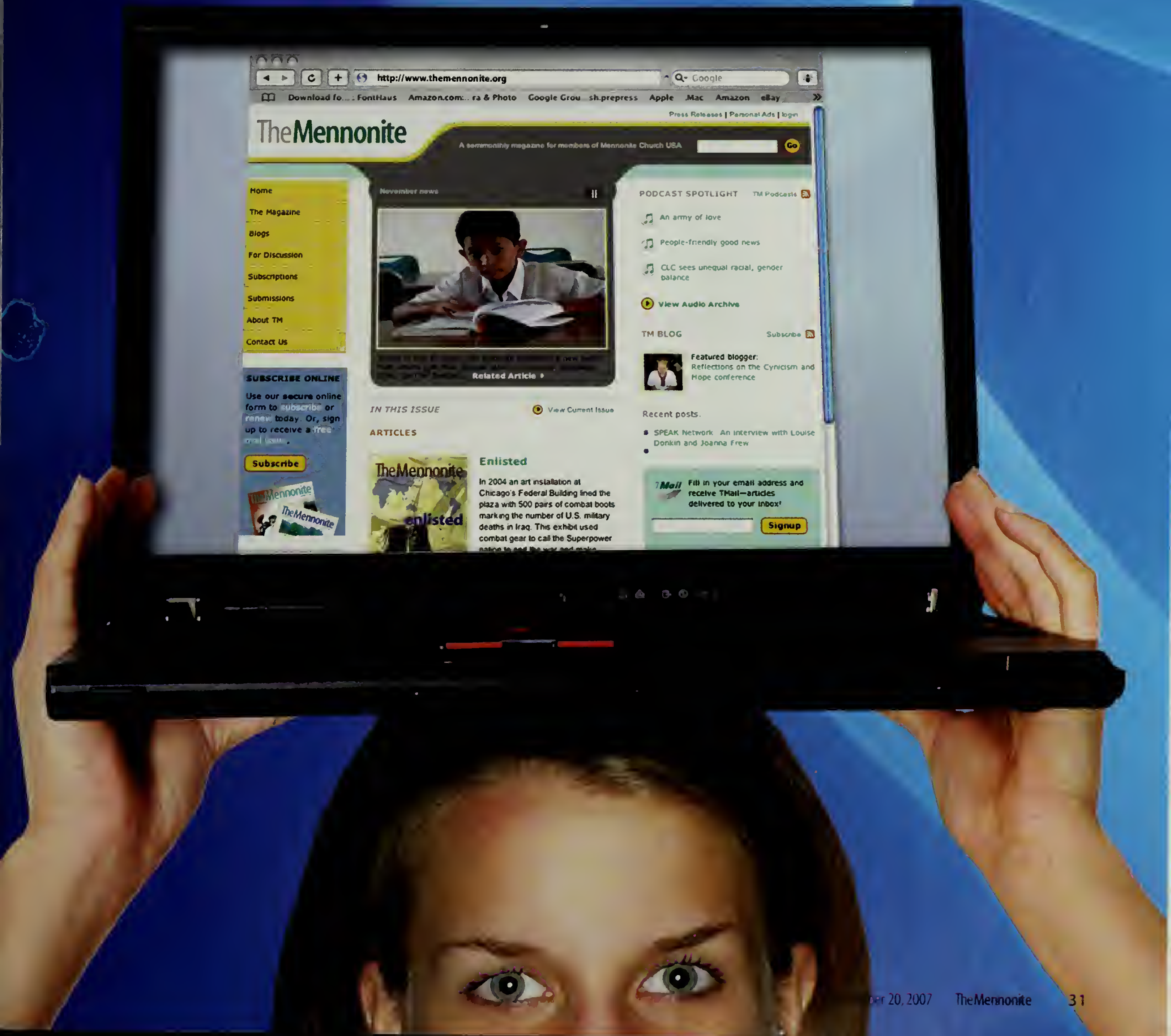

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I give thanks for sabbaticals

Everett J. Thomas

This Thanksgiving season I am particularly grateful for sabbaticals. The last three months have been a wonderful interlude from the ongoing deadlines here at *The Mennonite*.

When people found out what I was planning to do during the sabbatical ("Time for a Sabbatical," July 3), many had the same response: You're going to do all those things? That's not a vacation.

A sabbatical is not a vacation. It is a time to do some things not possible otherwise. It is also a time to disconnect from ongoing work and look at life from the perspective of a relaxed schedule.

So, beginning in August, I worked at three projects: a trip to the New Orleans area to examine the work of Mennonite Disaster Service, research for a historical novel and writing my memoirs of the 1990s, when the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church merged.

In our regular work we receive dozens of news releases each week and then discern which ones we can publish in our limited news space. Occasionally, we may have the time to generate an original story. So taking a trip to the New Orleans area ("10 Days in Katrina Land," Oct. 16) was a luxury. Almost never can we leave the office for several weeks and focus on one program. But the sabbatical allowed me to do that.

A sabbatical is not a vacation. It is a time to do some things not possible otherwise.

It also gave me the time to do something new: review the hours of video footage I shot at various MDS sites, then whittle it down to a few minutes. Doing so allowed us to post a video clip on our Web site that is a companion to the cover story. I hope you look at it. Where else will you get into a 14-foot flat-bottomed boat and head out on the bayou with an MDS director? It is a short-enough ride that you won't get seasick.

I timed the trip to "Katrina land" so that my 10 days there would end on Aug. 29, the two-year anniversary of the hurricane's landfall. But that anniversary adversely affected my travel plans. At the Gulfport, Miss., airport that afternoon, I was ready to head home, but all planes were grounded because Air Force One brought in President Bush to make an appearance in New Orleans.

When I began my sabbatical, I projected that I would have two big projects and two smaller projects. I thought the MDS project was a smaller one, but it took more time than I anticipated. I learned that a story like that cannot be told quickly or with minimal time given to coverage.

The primary sabbatical project was to begin a historical novel based on my immigrant ancestor Johann Thomas, who arrived in the Lancaster, Pa., area in 1747. I have now sent to the publisher what is required by their guidelines: a table of contents and two chapters. Their guidelines say it can take up to a year for them to decide whether to publish the manuscript. Among other things, this experience turns the tables: It reminds me how writers feel when they send manuscripts to us and must wait to learn whether we will accept them.

The primary learning from the research centered around the plight of Mennonites traveling across the Atlantic by ship. Many—especially young children—died along the way. Many were sick from contagions on board, bad food and contaminated water. Some immigrants ran out of money before reaching Philadelphia; this resulted in onboard tensions between those Mennonites who had money and those who did not.

Another sabbatical project turned out to take less time than I expected: writing my memoirs from the process that brought General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church together—to form Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA.

Finally, a personal project did not come to fruition. I hoped to get my captain's license from the U.S. Coast Guard but learned I have not yet logged enough days "on the water and under way." I guess I'll just need to spend more time sailing.

It is good to be back at the work here at *The Mennonite*. I do feel regenerated, refreshed and grateful for this wonderful work. This Thanksgiving I give thanks for sabbaticals.—*ejt*

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

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December 4, 2007

ready for retirement

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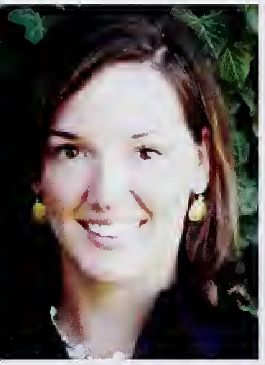
A means of (trans)forming



Rachel Gerber is associate pastor of faith formation at First Mennonite Church in Denver.

In the opening chapter of Jeremiah is a call story. It begins: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (1:5). Being known by God, and chosen just as we are. Isn't that what we all long to hear? That we matter? That we have worth?

There is a difference between being special because you are chosen and chosen because you are special. God appointed Jeremiah to be the voice of God not because he was special but because he was chosen (willing to be used). Likewise, God calls out each of us to use our gifts for the healing of the world, not because we are special but because God chose us first.

Where is God calling us as a church? Who are we called to be? It begins with our church becoming a "culture of call," a place where people are nurtured in their faith and space is made for opportunities to discover and use their gifts. However, this spiritual formation is not for us alone. A culture of call sees formation as transformation. How are we being called to use our gifts and passions for the sake of others? For the healing and hope of our community or our world?

This is a growing edge for Mennonites. We are used to being "the quiet in the land." We join Jeremiah in protesting God's call: "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy" (1:6). We have many excuses for not knowing how to proceed. Perhaps the task seems too great, or there is just so much hurt and pain that we don't know where to start. Perhaps we feel cynical; how can we make a difference? Perhaps we are afraid of losing our tradition if our comfort zone is stretched too much. When these thoughts paralyze us, we run the risk of seeing ourselves and our church as created for our own preservation. We see ourselves as chosen because we are special rather than the other way around. We fail to grow new leaders and new ministries because we are comfortable with the way things are and work hard to preserve the structures at all costs. Living like this drains energy instead of building it.

But at the base of all of the excuses is fear—of inadequacy, change, the unknown. We hear: "There's not enough money. There's not enough space. I'm too busy. There's not enough help." But, as God responded to Jeremiah, God responds to us: "Do not be afraid ... I am with you" (1:8). This call is anchored in who God is, not in the limitations of who has been called. Perhaps fear is appropriate. We see ourselves and our limitations and wonder how we can do it. God sees all that can be and invites us to enter that dream.

Instead of seeing the work of the church as filling committees and going to meetings, what might it mean to live out of where your passions lie? To use your God-given gifts and abilities to invest in things you love doing rather than filling the slot or saying yes to a committee because you feel guilty saying no. Where is the Spirit leading you? Where does your desire meet the world's need? You'll have more than enough energy to do it because it stems from the core of who you are.

What voice is God giving to Mennonite Church USA? I wish I had a clear answer. May we trust that as we stay rooted and connected to the spirit of Christ, God will lead us into the unknown. We don't have to be afraid because, like Jeremiah, God is reaching out to touch our mouths, put words into them. As a culture of the called, may we be faithful in not only proclaiming these words but living them out so that our children will be formed into the faithful people of God who use their gifts in service to transform the world.

TheMennonite

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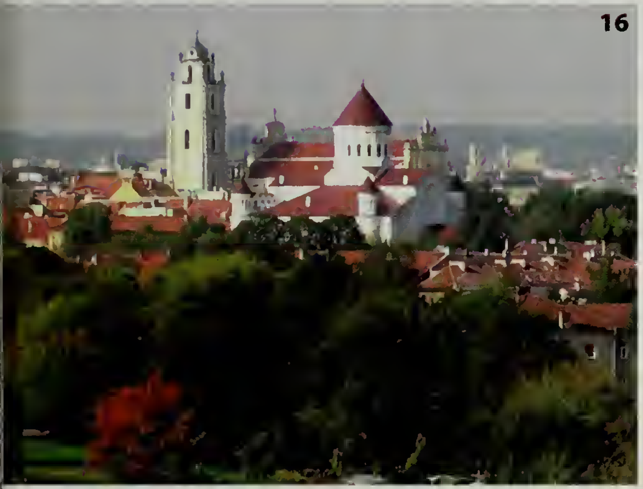

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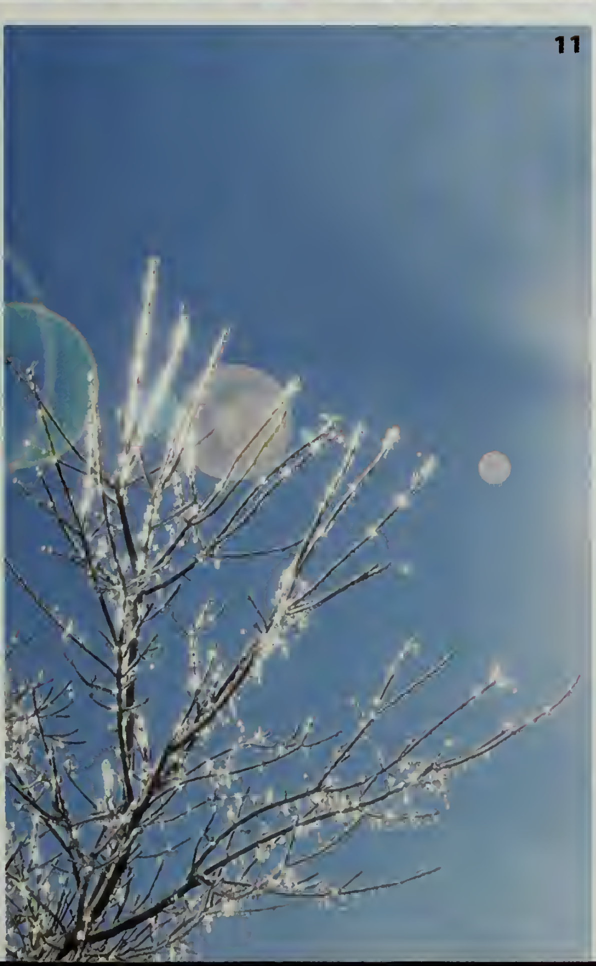

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Cover: Photos on cover and pages 8-10 by John Tirotta

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Make peace profitable

I found Lisa Schirch's Nov. 6 article ("Redeeming the Powers, Redeeming Ourselves") hopeful. Perhaps our military-industrial complex will begin to see that "grass-roots efforts of preventing violence and building peace and security" are not only much less expensive than military action but vastly more effective. Can we, as Mennonites, brainstorm effective methods to convince Congress that they must share our burning desire to follow Jesus' narrow way of peace? Cutting our own consumption is essential, but it is still another expression of being "quiet in the land." We also need to add our voices. We must redeem our Congress to believe that our choices are between nonviolent methods of societal change or annihilation—as Martin Luther King Jr. preached during the Vietnam era.

The real problem in our capitalistic society is creating as many jobs and as many opportunities for profits in the peace sector as in the war complex—that is, making peace as profitable as war. Surely we can do this.—*June Forsyth Kenagy, Albany, Ore.*

A culture of duty?

Thank you for the Nov. 6 issue, specifically the articles by Scott Key (Speaking Out) and Lisa Schirch. For a different voice, I read an article in "The Week" written by an Army veteran recently returned from the war in Iraq. He bemoans the absence of a "culture of duty" (duty assuming sacrifice) in American society. He was speaking from a military standpoint, but his words got me thinking. Do we as Anabaptist Mennonites still have any "culture of duty" in our discipleship?—*Hank Rossiter, Dalton, Ohio*

Rural revitalization and urbanization

As a father with young adult daughters who have migrated to the city after college, I appreciated your issue on urban migration (Oct. 2). It helped me understand my own family dynamics.

As a pastor who has spent 35 years serving declining rural congregations in the United States and Canada and is concerned for rural revitalization, there were some "hooks" in this issue. Lowell Brown repeats in his page 14 sidebar the oft-made assertion that "the early church got its start in towns and cities." While that seems to be the case in terms of the later Pauline pattern of mission, I question if it is an accurate assertion.

Jesus' ministry occurred in the highly urbanized setting of Galilee. As a craftsman from Nazareth, Jesus undoubtedly did work for the growing metropolis of Sepphoris a few miles away. Yet the setting for Jesus' ministry was in the rural communities of Galilee suffering the depredations of urbanization, and both Jesus' own ministry and the formation of the gospel testimony by Jesus' first followers reflect the reality that the earliest church developed as a rural revitalization movement around the central event of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection in Jerusalem.

While I acknowledge that urban life can be ecologically sound in terms of transportation and housing, I question whether our urban centers can be sustainable in terms of energy and food consumption—particularly as petroleum usage has peaked and will become increasingly costly. It might be that our denomination and our youth would do well to put creative energy into exploring the gospel message of rural revitalization and applying it to our increasingly urbanized setting. —*S. Roy Kaufman, Freeman, S.D.*

Harry's larger picture

In the Sept. 18 issue, Ryan Ahlgrim reported on a group of people who found Christ in the seventh book of the Harry Potter series. Ahlgrim's last two sentences read: "It would be disturbing if the Harry Potter books influenced children to pursue occult activities. But if these books point us toward God's kingdom, a reality that is everywhere but often unseen, then we have reason to be grateful for these books."

This raises two questions: What impact has the Harry Potter series had on children and youth? What is J.K. Rowling's worldview?

The impact on children and youth has some indicators. After the release of the first book,

IN THIS ISSUE

The four weeks before Christmas are a time to wait for God's presence, and the editorial on page 32 suggests some ways to pray during this time of anticipation. Ervin Beck (page 16) describes an experience in Lithuania, where he used "like Jesus" in an essay, and his students reacted negatively. "A Russian Orthodox student said the allusion ... was an offensive use of Jesus' name, which is too sacred, too holy to be so casually invoked and used in a personal essay." Mennonite World Conference president Nancy R. Heisey (page 12) challenges us with another reminder: Church history is important. "We may stumble on the question of why emperors were sending missionaries," Heisey says, "but perhaps an equally fruitful analogy for us is in the question of what identities our own sending institutions strive to protect." The lead news story in this issue is Anna Groff's report (page 19) about some junior high youth in South Bend, Ind., who are helping their congregation become more energy efficient.—*ejt* phone calls to occult and witchcraft organizations increased by 18 percent. A 2002 Barna Research Group poll of teens between 13 and 19 found that of the 9 million exposed to Harry Potter books and films, 12 percent said they had become more interested in witchcraft as the result of their exposure. This results in more than a million students nationwide who have been attracted to witchcraft. Wicca devotees and other occultists are hailing the Potter series as a prime recruitment tool.

On the second question, Rowling says she writes so that children may have fun—not to present a philosophy of life. She reports that she did serious research into witchcraft until she knew a "ridiculous amount" about it. The plainest reading of Harry Potter reveals that it is not a depiction of anything Christian but is rather a depiction of the magic real-world view. This has been confirmed by witches, occultists and neopagans. Rowling borrows symbols from many sources: Christianity, occultism, paganism, mythology, humanism and pop psychology. If she uses the resurrection theme, it does not mean she is bringing Christ into her series for she may be borrowing the myth found in many cultures.

Rowling develops her characters to exhibit situational ethics. Both the good "heroes" and the evil people use the same ethical source—what suits their desires.

Finding Christ in Harry Potter? I recommend the book by Richard Arbanes entitled *Harry Potter, Narnia, and The Lord of the Rings.—Harold Bauman, Goshen, Ind.*

What about Alabama?

It was disappointing not to have Alabama included in the coverage of Mennonite Disaster Service work ("Katrina Land," Oct. 16)—or even on the map for the extensive Katrina coverage. Alabama was still recovering from Hurricane Ivan in 2004 when Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, and there is still much work to be done there.

I also wish you had noted the serious need for long-term leadership volunteers, since that is a huge problem at Mennonite Disaster Service. Sites have been closed because of lack of leadership.—*Patricia Mack, MDS volunteer at Bayou La Batre, Ala.*

Mennonite Disaster Service responds

A large-scale binational response from Mennonite Disaster Service is often restricted by lack of long-term (one month or more) leadership. MDS is always looking for project directors, construction supervisors, office managers and cooks. To make a successful project, MDS needs key essential items that include volunteers (both short- and long-term) as well as lodging, meaningful work and funds for building materials provided by the homeowner or local community. Regrettably, we often find that when we don't have the long-term volunteers, we cannot sustain a project. Readers can help us if they know of volunteers skilled in the above areas and call us in the United States at 717-859-2210 and in Canada 204-261-1274.—*Kevin King, executive director, Mennonite Disaster Service*

Response to letters from readers

Recent responses to Steve Steiner's article, "The Idol in Our Midst" (Speaking Out, Oct. 2) have been interesting at several levels. First, there is an almost complete lack of understanding about the history of the modern state of Israel. Then there is the illogical comparison with Barabbas. Another response cites a former U.S. President when it has been demonstrated that his material contains numerous factual errors. But the response that purported to speak for Jesus is astonishing and comes off as a tad arrogant.

When "replacement theology" manages the agenda, Jesus is essentially de-Judeaized. And where does that lead? Are we to somehow see the Savior of the world as a closet Gentile?—*John O. Yoder, Manheim, Pa.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

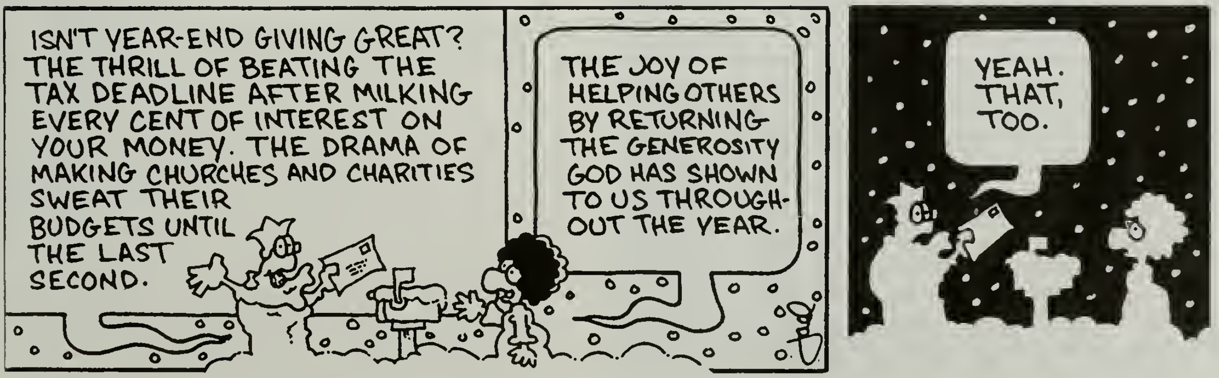
Re retirement (51 responses):

- ○ I'm retired and doing well (29%)
- ○ I'm retired and wish I'd planned better (12%)
- ○ I've made specific plans (18%)
- ○ I need to make better plans (16%)
- ○ What retirement? (25%)

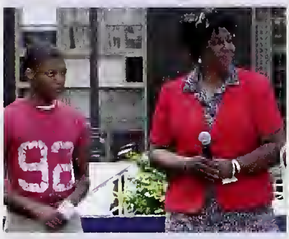
Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Correction: The Illinois Conference newsletter is *Missionary Guide,* not *The Reporter* (Readers Say, Nov. 20, page 4).

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


ISN'T YEAR-END GIVING GREAT? THE THRILL OF BEATING THE TAX DEADLINE AFTER MILKING EVERY CENT OF INTEREST ON YOUR MONEY. THE DRAMA OF MAKING CHURCHES AND CHARITIES SWEAT THEIR BUDGETS UNTIL THE LAST SECOND.
THE JOY OF HELPING OTHERS BY RETURNING THE GENEROSITY GOD HAS SHOWN TO US THROUGH-OUT THE YEAR.
YEAH. THAT, TOO.

IN BRIEF


Ron Tinsley

PMHS receives Stand for Peace Award

Philadelphia Mennonite High School senior Caleb Cooper (left) and PMHS principal Barbara Moses (right) receive the 2007 Stand for Peace Award for Transformative Education on behalf of PMHS at the Stand for Peace Rally by the Metropolitan Council of Christian Churches of Philadelphia and the Stand for Peace Committee.—*Ron Tinsley*

Numbers for Iranian views, bipolar disorder, prisoners

- Percentage of Iranians who favor normal relations and trade with the United States: 68.
- Percentage of Iranians who strongly support a democratic system: 79.
- Number of diagnoses of bipolar disorder for patients under age 20 in 1994: 20,000.
- Number of diagnoses of bipolar disorder for patients under age 20 in 2003: 800,000.
- Number incarcerated out of every 100,000 black males in Apartheid South Africa in 1993: 851.
- Number incarcerated out of every 100,000 black males in the United States in 2006: 4,789.—*Yes! magazine*

MCC assesses needs in Bangladesh

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is assessing humanitarian needs in southern Bangladesh following a cyclone that struck the region on Nov. 15.

Cyclone Sidr devastated communities along Bangladesh's coast, claiming more than 3,000 lives, according to news reports. Two MCC staff members visited affected communities Nov. 19-22 to assess humanitarian needs.

The cyclone came a few months after floods devastated much of the country. Bangladesh is regularly hit by cyclones and floods, but Cyclone Sidr was the most destructive storm to strike the country in more than a decade. Winds reached 155 miles per hour as they whipped through the Bay of Bengal.

MCC is accepting financial contributions for its work in Bangladesh. Contributions may be made through any MCC office or at mcc.org/donate. Donations should be marked Bangladesh Emergency Response.

MCC has worked in Bangladesh since the early 1970s, when it helped provide relief following a cyclone. MCC also supports agricultural development, job creation, peacebuilding, education and improving water sources in Bangladesh. MCC workers in Bangladesh are reported safe.—*MCC*

Everett J. Thomas

New schools for racial/ethnic Mennonites

Conrad Kanagy reports data from the Church Member Profile 2006 survey at the "Education Opportunities Summit" Nov.12-13 in Middlebury, Ind. Starting three to five new schools in communities where underrepresented racial/ethnic Mennonites live is one recommendation from a task force established by Mennonite Education Agency. The group's recommendations also include partnerships to deliver Anabaptist-Mennonite education opportunities in urban areas and the creation of two endowment funds: one to fund racial/ethnic students attending Mennonite schools and a second to fund local initiatives in support of racial/ethnic Mennonites. Some 60 educational and racial/ethnic leaders met to review and approve the task force's recommendations. The recommendations now go to the MEA board for action at its February 2008 meeting. —*Everett J. Thomas*

Longtime mission worker in India dies at 84

HARRISONBURG, Va.— During more than a half-century of service, Esther Mast Kniss focused on sharing Christ, being a presence for his kingdom and passing on power to the local church.

Esther Kniss

Esther Kniss and her husband, Paul, spent 43 years as mission workers in India with Mennonite, Brethren in Christ and Missionary churches through Mennonite Board of Missions, a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network. They also served short-term mission assignments in Trinidad and Tobago through Virginia Mennonite Missions and in India with these same three denominations. Along with evangelism, a part of the Knisses' assignment was to help transfer control of church and missional activity from international mission organizations to national workers.

Esther Kniss, 84, died Oct. 28 in Harrisonburg after a sudden illness.

Emmanuel Minj, chairman of Bihar Mennonite Mandli (Bihar Mennonite Church) and director of Mennonite Christian Service Fellowship of India, says the Knisses worked in Bihar longer than any other mission workers. Their work, he says, helped give birth to many ministries, in part because of their humility and simplicity.

Esther Mast Kniss was born Jan. 6, 1923, in Morgantown, Pa., the daughter of the late John and Rebecca Hartz Mast. On Aug. 23, 1947, she married Paul G. Kniss. He survives with five sisters, Edna Mae (James) Good of Lancaster, Pa.; Ida Swartley of Harrisonburg; Ruthanna (Darrel) Otto of Denver; Naomi (Chester) Sensenig of Warwick, N.Y.; Selena (Kenneth) Horning of Oley, Pa.; one brother, Albert (Marilyn) Mast of Buffalo, N.Y., and many nieces and nephews. A brother-in-law, Henry Swartley, is deceased.—*Virginia Mennonite Missions and Mennonite Mission Network*

Motorbikes support Congolese ministries

NEWTON, Kan.—It can take more than five hours to go 60 miles up an ordinary road in the East Kasai region of Congo. The rut-filled and washed-out roads make transportation difficult, and Congolese leaders say inadequate transportation is a major obstacle to their churches' growth.

"We need to be able to get to the people," says Rev. Benjamin Mubenga, president of the Evangelical Mennonite Church in Congo (CEM), with 24,000 members in 86 congregations.

Kathy Landis

DS clinic in Uganda honors doctor

ore than 30 AIDS patients sing together to celebrate the Oct. dedication of an HIV/AIDS clinic that Mennonite Central mmittee helped build at Mengo Hospital in Kampala, anda. Dr. Laverne and Mrs. Jean Landis, a retired Mennonite uple from Tunkhannock, Pa., attended the dedication along th four family members. The couple contributed to the clinic ilding project through MCC in honor of their daughter, Dr. nnie Landis, who died of cancer in 2005. Konnie Landis and r husband, Bill Sutherland, visited Mengo Hospital on their neymoon in 2004, and the new clinic was dedicated in her nor.—*MCC*

More than 200,000 baptized Mennonites comprise three conferences in Congo. Many of these churches have connections with mission work begun more than 50 years ago. Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite churches in Congo are working together to build church-to-church relationships that rely on partnerships where each group gives and receives gifts from the other.

This Christmas season, Mennonite Church USA encourages congregations to help brothers and sisters in Congo purchase motorbikes for the district leaders and evangelism and service coordinators furthest from the central church office in Mbuji Mayi.

A gift of $2,000 provides a motorbike for one of the district pastors. Or give an individual gift that can be combined with other gifts. Checks may be sent to Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114-0347, designated for "motorbikes for Congo."—*Mennonite Church USA*

Desmund Tutu talks with students at EMU

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu met Sept. 25 with African graduate students at the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding and other staff and students from Eastern Mennonite University.

Their conversation focused on the application of Anabaptist theological commitments to world crises. In particular, they discussed the commitment to nonviolent intervention and the nature of the church's transcendence of national borders. They explored how to practice the Rule of Christ (Matthew 18:15-17) with those who profit from the global system of exploitation by Christians (Christian consumers complicit with Christian corporate executives, Christian practitioners of coercive politics and Christian dictators).

Archbishop Tutu recalled that "Mennonites were some of our strongest supporters in our struggle against apartheid." He said the students should try to move forward on their dreams to embody a uniquely Christlike form of intervention. A transcript of the conversation and more information can be found at outsourcingslavery.org.
—*EMU*

Bethel students injured in accidents

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Two Bethel College students were injured in separate automobile accidents during the school's recent Thanksgiving break.

On Nov. 20, Sunita Pudasaini, a junior nursing student from Nepal, was driving south from Newton to Wichita on Interstate 135 when her car crossed the median and hit a semi-trailer. Bethel president Barry C. Bartel reported the next day that Pudasaini had been moved into the intensive care surgical unit at Wesley Medical Center in Wichita and was likely to remain there for several days. She suffered a severely fractured hip, fractured ribs resulting in a punctured lung, a dislocated ankle and other injuries.

The drivers of the semi and one other vehicle involved received only minor injuries.

On Nov. 23, Bethel College sophomore Brittany Voth and her parents, Lester and Lois Voth, from Goessel, Kan., were involved in an accident while returning from a visit to Lois Voth's mother in western Kansas. A car coming from the opposite direction lost control, crossed the center line and hit the Voth car. Lester and Lois Voth, who were riding in the front seat, were protected from serious injury by the car's airbags. Brittany Voth was critically injured by the force of her seat belt. She underwent surgery to reconnect a torn colon and to repair an artery. She also suffered a broken arm, a small fracture in her lower back and a rib fracture. She remains in the intensive care unit at St. Francis Medical Center in Wichita.

No information was available about the driver of the other car involved in the Voth accident.
—*Bethel College*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

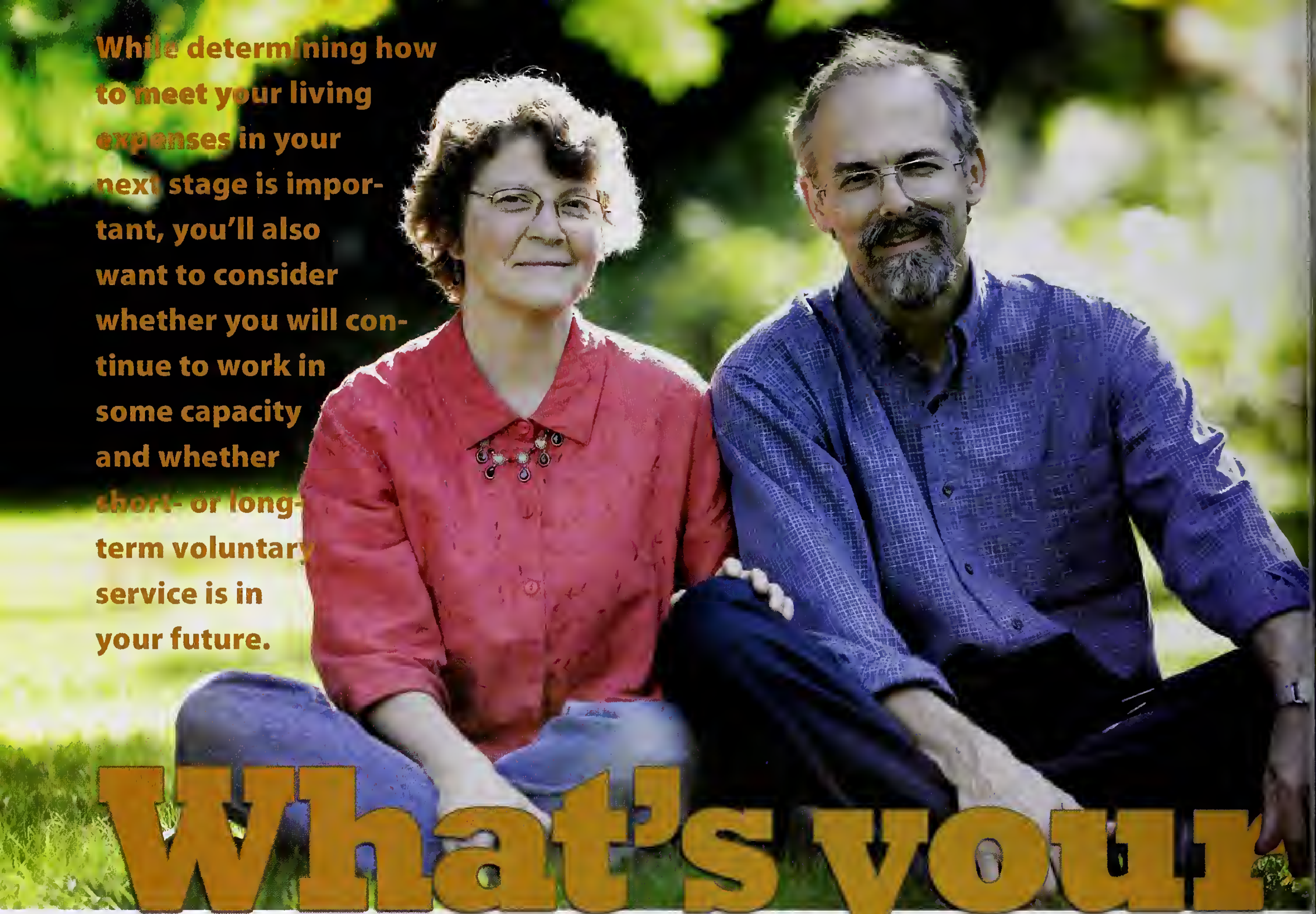
IN BRIEF

EMU student wins C. Henry Smith Peace Contest

Nicholas L. (Nick) Stoddard, a senior biblical studies major from Wellman, Iowa, at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., received first prize in the binational C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest. He won a cash gift and a scholarship to attend a peace-related conference for his speech "Connect the Dots." His oration focused on developing a mindset that sees how one's actions have a direct effect on other people, even those at great geographic distance. View the speech at www.emu.edu/news/nicholas_stoddard.pdf. Stoddard is co-leader of EMU Peace Fellowship with Katrina Alger and Michell Kennel. He is married to Erika Detweiler Stoddard, a 2007 EMU graduate, and is a member of Kalona (Iowa) Mennonite Church.
—*EMU*

Camp Mennoscah to get new director's house

Western District Conference leaders held a groundbreaking ceremony Nov. 4 at Camp Mennoscah near Murdock, Kan. A new 1,600 sq. ft. director's house is scheduled for completion by volunteer labor in late spring 2008. The handicap-accessible facility will sit atop the highest point of the camp's 160 acres.—*WDC*



While determining how to meet your living expenses in your next stage is important, you'll also want to consider whether you will continue to work in some capacity and whether short- or long-term voluntary service is in your future.

What's your

by Michael Ehret

Whether your retirement is just a couple years away, 10 years or more, it is never too early to think about what you want out of your next stage. In fact, failing to consider it could be costly—and could mean you may not meet your goals.

One couple looks ahead: Ken and Becky Horst, Goshen, Ind., say they are seven or eight years away from retirement. But don't look for them in rocking chairs on their front porch when the time comes.

"Neither one of us intends to completely quit working at that point," Becky says. "But we are looking forward to more flexible time, time to visit family and friends and time to address things that are being ignored now."

While both of the Horsts are looking forward to a flexible schedule, they don't necessarily agree about every little detail concerning their pending retirement.

"We don't always have the same priorities," Becky says. "I tend to want to spend as little as possible, and Ken is a little more free with the money."

Finding enough in retirement in a world focused on more

next stage?

Both agree, however, that living simply is part of God's call on their lives. "We want to keep our obligations low enough to be flexible to follow God's call—wherever it may lead," Becky says.

Think about more than the money: While determining how to meet your living expenses in your next stage is important, you'll also want to consider whether you will continue to work in some capacity and whether short- or long-term voluntary service is in your future. Finally, since in general people are living longer, you may have to devise a longer-term strategy.

Keeping the paycheck coming: Most of us, like the Horsts, are dependent on a regular paycheck. It's probably not the foundation we've built our lives on, but it does make life easier. So as you think about your retirement, consider that paycheck. If it is no longer coming in or is reduced due to your part-time status, how will you make up the difference?

Some income will come from Social Security, but according to a recent study by that agency, those benefits provide an average of only 39 percent of the total income needed by people ages 65 and over. Clearly most people will need more than the income the government provides.

Roughly half of retirees today have an employer-provided retirement plan, with the majority of those in a defined contribution plan, such as a 401(k) or a 403(b). The rest are in defined benefit plans, such as pensions. But if you are in the other half of retirees, those who don't have any plan, you have to provide for yourself. A trustworthy financial adviser can help you determine which plans work best for your needs.

Retirement job? Perhaps you're thinking part of the money you need will come from a retirement job. Surveys show that two-thirds to three-fourths of your peers expect to work at least some during their next stage.

This includes the Horsts. Ken, a science teacher at a local high school, hopes to reduce his teaching load, while Becky, who works at Goshen College as an instructor and administrator, is also looking forward to going to part-time.

But what if you can't continue working—even part-time? What if you develop health problems or can't find the kind of work you want? According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the Employee Benefit Research Institute found that only 27 percent of those who have already retired have ever worked for pay while in retirement. What will you do if your intentions to work in retirement don't pan out, regardless of the reason why?

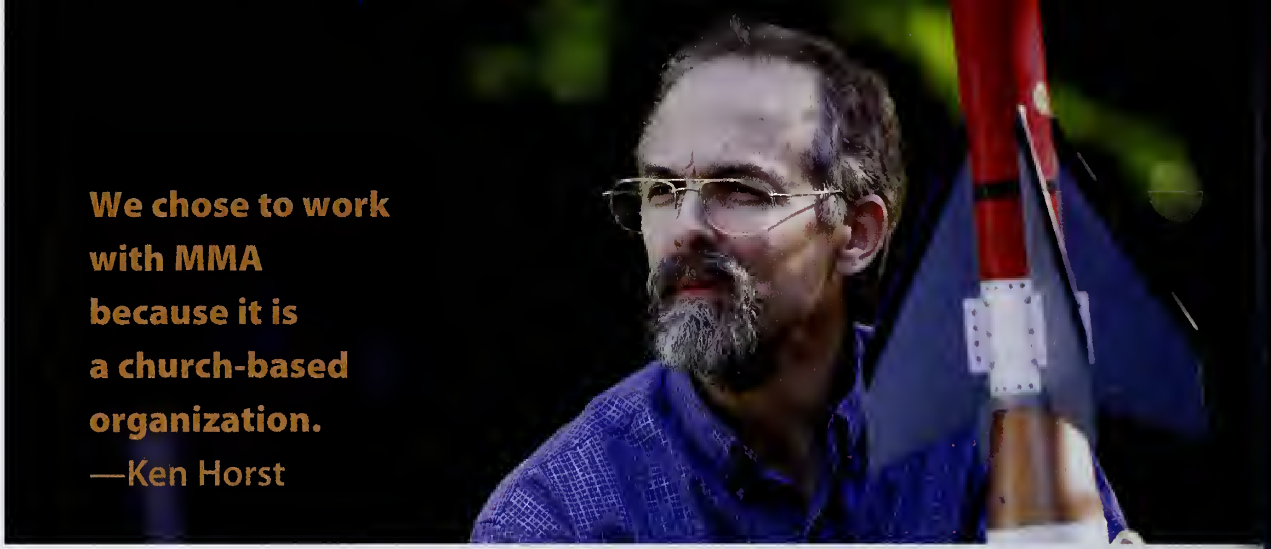
Giving back to God: If you don't work in retirement—and even if you do—perhaps you are interested in participating in short- or long-term mission service as a way to give back to the world and to God. Because you see your life as belonging to God, you may well want to take part in efforts to further God's kingdom. Many options are available, but how can you connect with these options?

You may try exploring ways you can plug in with the work of Mennonite Mission Network (www.mennonitemission.net), the mission agency of Mennonite Church USA. Service options are available for all ages and interests in locations in the United States and abroad.

Or, as Ken Horst is planning, consider volunteering with Mennonite Disaster Service (www.mds.mennonite.net). "A group of us went

Continued on page 10

When retirement comes, I want to have more time to teach Sunday school, write curriculum and volunteer in a variety of ways to help further God's kingdom.
—Becky Horst



We chose to work with MMA because it is a church-based organization.
—Ken Horst

Continued from page 9

down to New Orleans, and I was able to help rewire a house," Ken says. "When I have more time in retirement, I'd like to spend more time on projects like that—to be able to follow them through to completion."

MDS works with various constituencies of the larger Anabaptist church to respond quickly and efficiently to those affected by disasters in Canada and the United States, cleaning up, repairing and rebuilding homes while touching lives and helping people regain faith and wholeness.

Becky has similar desires. "One of my passions is working for the church," she says. "When retirement comes, I want to have more time to teach Sunday school, write curriculum and volunteer in a variety of ways to help further God's kingdom."

Increased life expectancy: Chances are you may have longer than you thought to enjoy your family and friends in retirement. According to a 2003 report from the Centers for Disease Control, life expectancy in the United States has reached a new high: 77.2 years. By gender it breaks down to an average for women of 79.8 years; men, 74.4 years.

What does it mean? It means, statistically, you have an even longer retirement to plan for. Because an "average" age means you have a 50 percent chance of living longer than that average, careful strategizing now becomes even more critical.

How long will my money last? MMA counselors have exclusive access to a Retirement Income Risk Calculator—a tool that can help you determine just how long the money you have saved will last. The calculator analyzes your actual savings and estimated expenses based on 130 years of inflation and investment performance history. It then gives you a range of possible outcomes.

From the options, you can choose various ones and have the calculator play out the likelihood that each outcome will lead to your desired result. From there, with your MMA counselor, you can choose the outcome you want to aim for and learn what sort of adjustments you need to make to your spending or the way you invest your savings to reach you goal.

Ken and Becky's MMA counselor helped them focus their retirement planning.

"About three years ago we learned that MMA provided financial counseling," Becky says. "We jumped at the chance to talk with someone about retirement planning. Our counselor helped us identify what our values were [and] what things were important to us, and then we were able to adjust our investment to keep those things in line." Ken agreed. "We chose to work with MMA because it is a church-based organization. We had a sense of … common values. Our counselor understood what we wanted to do."

Enough vs. more: The world is constantly shouting, "More, more, more"—a theme that can carry over to conversations about retirement. Many people working in this field suggest having $1 million in savings as a minimum for a successful retirement. But how much do you really need?

It's entirely possible you won't need that much, depending on your goals. You do need money for your next stage. Everyone understands that. But how much? The answers are not simple—there are too many variables.

A new resource from MMA, available at no cost, can help you determine how much enough is for your retirement. MMA's booklet "Your enough" helps you determine what your hopes and dreams are for your next stage, and knowing that can help you prepare for the future. An MMA counselor can then help with the numbers.

What is your enough? Is it giving your life away in service? Is it vacationing in Cancun? Or investing your life in your children and grandchildren? This simple booklet can help you determine your enough. Find out more about this resource at www.yourenough.com or call MMA at 800-348-7468.

Sneaking up on you: Retirement doesn't have to surprise you, and you don't have to be afraid of it. But you do need to prepare for it. What do you want your next stage to be? How will you get there? What is your "enough"?

Michael Ehret is an editor in the MMA communications department in Goshen, Ind.

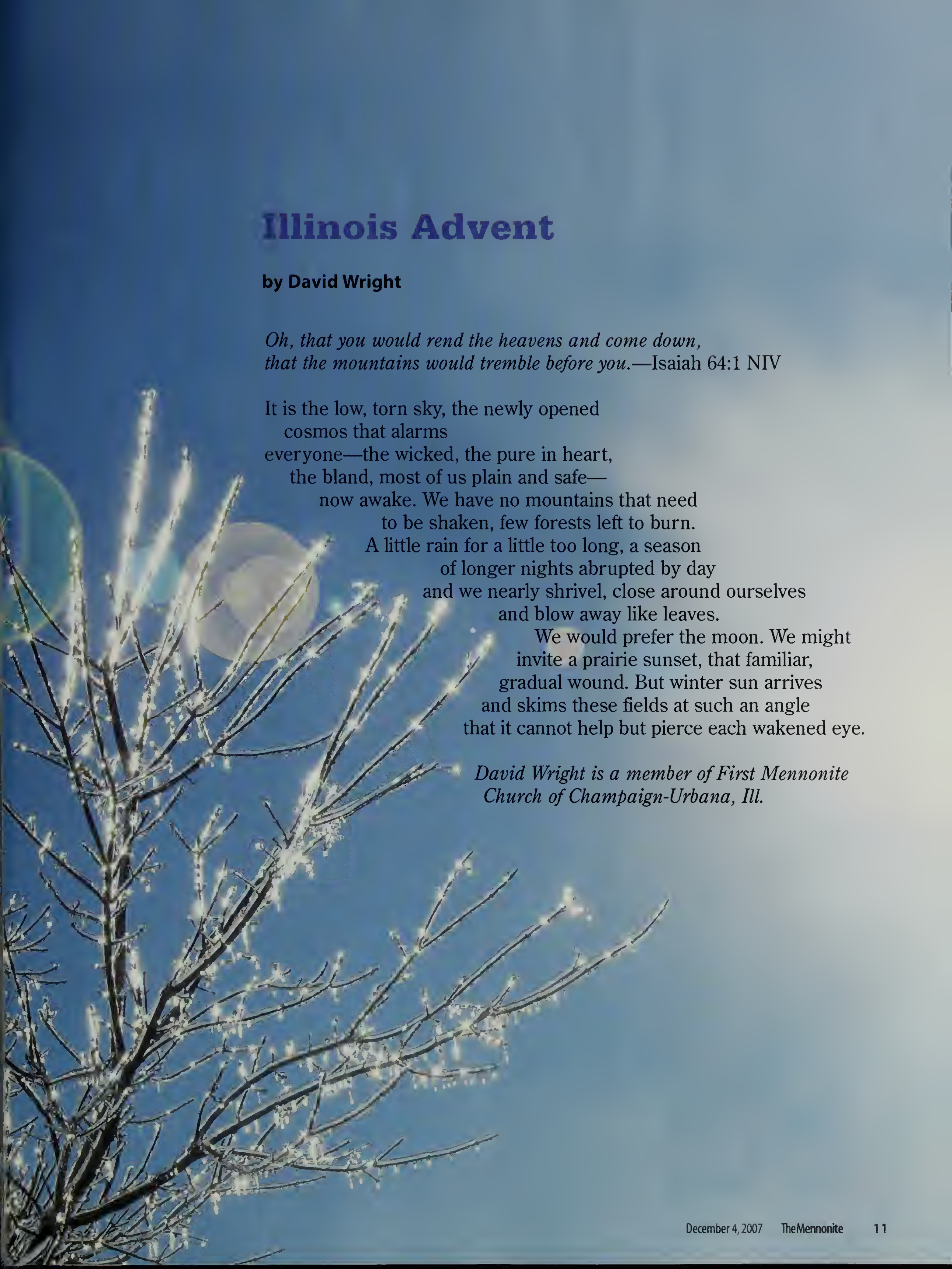
Illinois Advent

by David Wright

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains would tremble before you.—Isaiah 64:1 NIV

It is the low, torn sky, the newly opened
cosmos that alarms
everyone—the wicked, the pure in heart,
the bland, most of us plain and safe—
now awake. We have no mountains that need
to be shaken, few forests left to burn.
A little rain for a little too long, a season
of longer nights abrupted by day
and we nearly shrivel, close around ourselves
and blow away like leaves.
We would prefer the moon. We might
invite a prairie sunset, that familiar,
gradual wound. But winter sun arrives
and skims these fields at such an angle
that it cannot help but pierce each wakened eye.

David Wright is a member of First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana, Ill.



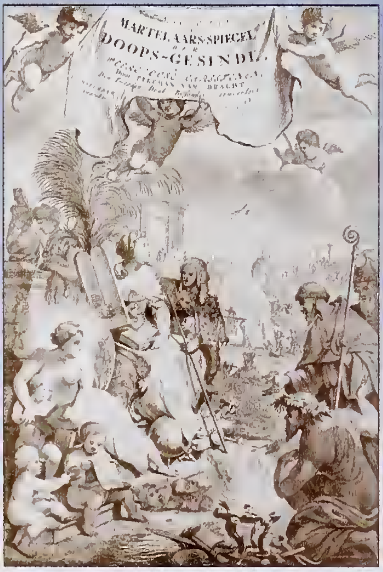
Why church matters

Why learn about the liv
and choices long ago?

by Nancy R. Heisey

Last spring at a student recognition chapel at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., Mary Sprunger, chair of the history department, presented graduating senior Rachel Spory with a copy of *Martyrs Mirror*, that weighty tome that many of us, at least those over 50, like to claim was always on our bookshelf at home when we were children. It seemed like an appropriate award for "outstanding achievement in history" of a student graduating from a Mennonite institution of higher education. But the gesture made me think again about the question I address every time I open my course on church history: So what? Why put effort into learning about the lives of Christians and their places and choices from long ago and far away?

Many of us subsist on a historical menu for contemporary faith communities that reads: Nero and Constantine: bad; Book of Acts and Menno Simons: good. But I propose that deeper and wiser knowing about the past of the broad Christian movement—and about how Mennonite communities fit, and sometimes don't, within that movement—is essential for our perseverance and growth in faithful witness today.



Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton

Ancestor worship? One archaeologist claims that most humans throughout the long sweep of human history have shared the fundamental religious value of ancestor worship. But the faith that has shaped much of the Western/Northern world for 300 years and given rise to technological complexity, colonialism and its aftermath, scientific breakthrough and global capitalism, has pushed in the opposite direction. Most of us living in the global North have thus been trained to think that only "the new" matters. In recent years, voices have begun to be widely heard questioning the impact that faith in human achievement has had on human society and on the earth.

We need a new recognition that we as human animals are hard-wired to think about and honor what we receive from those who came before us. We know that intimately when we look at a newborn and evaluate the visible presence of the Claassen chin or the Gonzalez ears. But how do we as Christians and as Mennonites honor this aspect of our God-given humanity? It sounds odd to call us to "ancestor worship." Yet African theologians, working in settings much closer to traditional ancestor worship, have suggested that for African Christians Jesus Christ is the Great Ancestor. Learning to follow Christ in life is thus enriched as we learn about people who also have committed

history

f Christians and their places

Images: Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton and Goshen

If we want to know who we are, we need to know who our ancestors in faith were, because they are our family, and in their choices we may see the patterns we also choose to trace.

themselves to do so throughout the centuries and across the globe. If we want to know who we are, we need to know who our ancestors in faith were, because they are our family, and in their choices we may see the patterns we also choose to trace.

Nuggets to be mined: One of the ways our society passes on wisdom from the past is in the form of *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*. Preachers scan a book or the Web for pithy statements on whatever topic they are addressing, while many others of us just check our calendars for the "thought for the day." Although there is nothing wrong with sound bites of decontextualized inspiration, using them thoughtlessly can tempt us into believing that people from the past are just like us, except, as Archbishop Rowan Williams puts it in *Why Study the Past?* (see box, page 14), they're dressed up in old-fashioned clothes. Yet students of stories of the Christian movement can indeed be inspired by the winsomeness in writings of believers from other times, which speak even more clearly if we know something about where they come from. Scholars need to plow through the complete writings of Pilgram Marpeck in the original language and study the economic life of 16th-century central European cities to deepen their understandings of his work. But for most of us, just knowing that Marpeck was a civil servant can bring renewed energy to our commitment to service in our workplaces as we read: "It was inadequate for the Lord to address his followers with physical words. … Rather, he lowered himself to washing the feet of his disciples."

Knowing that a second-century writer described Christians as people for whom "every foreign land is their homeland and every homeland is a foreign land" may help us think about how to build relationships with sister churches in other parts of the world today. Hearing the longing for each other as well as the love for God in the 16th-century prison letters of Lijsken Dircks and Jerome Segers reminds us of the humanity through which all faith is expressed. Our commitment to the day-to-day slog of resisting war can be deepened by reading letters from southern France of World War II Mennonite Central Committee relief worker Lois Gunden. Knowing that hundreds of southern French, whose ancestors had been victims of an anti-heretic crusade, hid Jews in that same region at that same time provides breadth to our understanding of how suffering can breed faithfulness. Short quotes from the pages of history may be valuable, but digging further to put them in their

Our commitment to the day-to-day slog of resisting war can be deepened by reading letters from southern France of World War II Mennonite Central Committee relief worker Lois Gunden.

Continued on page 14

It is time to ask what can be learned from the dialogue held in Baghdad in 781 between Patriarch Timothy of the East Syrian church and the Abbasid Caliph Mahdi.

Continued from page 13

own contexts often turns them into golden insights that both question and encourage us.

Analogies to grow by: Many of us remember practicing for tests where we needed to demonstrate the similarities between words or concepts that are not the same. "Oar is to boat as x is to bicycle," we recited, and we rummaged through our experience for the right word. As we gain skill in seeing how things are both unlike and alike, our abilities to choose wisely are strengthened. This is no less true when we turn to the stories of our ancestors in faith.

The ability to find analogies is already essential for Scripture to speak in our churches. We don't hold common meals to which hungry slaves arrive late and are at risk for starvation if the food is gone when they get there (1 Corinthians 11). But we do partake of the Lord's Supper in our churches. What is the connection, the picture we need, to join in this meal "worthily" in our churches today? In *The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom* (Trinity Press International, 1999), historian Alan Kreider has suggested another important analogy for 21st-century Christians—the breakup of old churchly structures, the lack of political power to force anyone to be a Christian and the diversity of religious options swirling around us, all of which create a climate for faith choices that is more like the early Christian period than at any time in the last 1,500 years.

If we look carefully, we find challenging analogies from the history of the Christian movement around the world that give us space to move beyond the old European stories that many of us have been too familiar with and thus untouched by. Pondering how to effectively cooperate globally in spreading the gospel, what do we learn from the sixth-century imperial couple Justinian and Theodora? They apparently loved each other and worked effectively together in determining policies for the Byzantine Empire. But when it came to sending missionaries to Nubia (now northern Sudan), they competed ruthlessly—the envoy of Justinian was a Chalcedonian Christian and that of Theodora was not. We may stumble on the question of why emperors were sending missionaries, but perhaps an equally fruitful analogy for us is in the question of what identities our own sending institutions strive to protect.

In a century that at its opening is being defined as a conflict between Islam and the West, we need to stretch beyond our rudimentary knowledge of the crusades, useful though that knowledge may be. It is time to ask what can be learned from the dialogue held in Baghdad in 781 between Patriarch Timothy of the East Syrian church and the Abbasid Caliph Mahdi. What does it mean that Patriarch Timothy was able to quote so confidently from the Qur'an in this conversation? Rowan Williams writes: "We read our past confident that there is a reality to which we relate in common, something that is realized diversely in irreducibly different contexts: our relationship with God in Christ."

Courage for complexity: Where God in Christ is at work in our world—that's what we strive to see and to participate in. Casual references to church history often give the impression of an unbroken thread of triumphs down through the centuries. When we look around us, whether in our own congregations or in the broader Christian story, it is tempting to become discouraged because our reality does not look like that triumphant train. But if we take the time to learn more about the many times and places where people have sought to be faithful to Christ, we realize there was no "golden age" for the church. Temptations and failures were part of every generation of our family of faith. Yet taking the time to study our history can give us courage as well. For those pages reveal, over and over, in the face of a host of different challenges, choices of faithfulness and signs of the Spirit's presence. As John Roth repeats in *Stories: How Mennonites Came to Be* (Herald Press, 2006), God's people are called to the nitty-gritty task of being incarnational—participating in making the word flesh. It is exactly in such settings that our Lord has promised to be with us, to the close of the age.

Nancy R. Heisey teaches church history at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va. She is also president of Mennonite World Conference.

Why Study the Past? The Quest for the Historical Church by Rowan Williams (Eerdmans, 2005, $15) is, typically for Williams, erudite and pastoral. He writes to encourage people "to look at Christian history expecting to be surprised and questioned." He argues against either glorifying or ignoring the past: "Whether we use the past as an inflexible standard of correctness or neglect it as a record of premodern error, we isolate ourselves from the real life of the past. And when the past in question is the life of the Church, that real life is in its ultimate depth the life of Christ." "Good theology does not come from bad history," he writes, and bad history either gives us "a version of the past that is just the present in fancy dress" or dismisses the past as "a wholly foreign country whose language we shall never learn." Williams points to the martyr as "a conduit of divine presence who vindicates the claim to another citizenship." And our own witness (the meaning of martyr) is weakened by our illiteracy "about how religious faith worked in other ages." This small, accessible book is invaluable.—*Gordon Houser*

Love is a principle, not a law, and it works.

Does love *really* work?

by D. Lowell Nissley

Photographer: Jennifer Walz Agency: Dreamstime.com

Yes, love does really work. Would Jesus have quoted Deuteronomy 6:5 to a teacher of the law, "Love God with all your heart, soul and mind, and your neighbor as yourself," if it did not? Later he racheted it up: "Love your enemies."

Would Paul have told the Christians in Corinth that love was more durable than faith and hope, if it did not work?

Would Jesus have told the Pharisees that law was not the final answer, if it could upstage love?

If love is real and works, why is war so popular? Why does Caesar rely on 500-pound bombs and nuclear threats to solve international conflicts rather than seeking ways to show respect and dignity and well-being for others, or is love somehow the sole property of Christians, while God has a different set of rules for Caesar?

Love is a principle, not a law, and it works. People who train horses and dogs have known this for a long time. Sensitive teachers of children know it. Counselors of dysfunctional families know it. Conflict resolution professionals know it. Even little children know it:

- "Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken" (age 5).
- "Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen" (age 7).
- "If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend you hate" (age 6).
- Author and lecturer Leo Buscaglia was once asked to judge a contest to find the most caring child. The winner was a 4-year-old whose next-door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap and just sat there.

When his mother asked what he said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing, I just helped him cry."

Since we know that love works and that there are 2.1 billion of us in the world, why does love seem so anemic and its voice muted in the halls of power? It is often said that if we lived in a perfect world, then "turn the other cheek" might make sense, but since we don't live in a perfect world, one has to be "realistic." But that we don't live in a perfect world is precisely why Jesus came to die for it. Jesus preached that sermon on the mountain so we could all get along with one another in this imperfect world.

Do you suppose we could get some help if we invited Paul for dinner and asked him to explain further what he meant in Romans 7:7-25? He writes: "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (v. 15). Could this explain the inconsistent behavior of devout, present-day Christians?

Tony Campolo observed in *Christian Week*: "I find it strange that the last place I can really quote Jesus these days is in American churches. They don't want to hear 'overcome evil with good.' They don't want to hear, 'Those who live by the sword die by the sword.' They don't want to hear, 'If your enemy hurts you, do good, feed, clothe and minister to him.' They don't want to hear, 'Love your enemies.'" It is not that American churches are filled with bad people. They are good, praying, generous and caring people seeking the will of God. But they are also victims, as are we all, of Paul's dilemma: "For I do not do the good I want."

Love works, whether Christian or not. Christian love was working in September 2006, when three of the four Christian theologians invited by the Iranian government to speak at a Muslim conference in Iran were people with a long history of commitment to the principles of agape love. This invitation was the result of many previous years of dialogue between these Christians and Muslims in which the principles of good will and respect were practiced and in return elicited the same. The Caesars of the world might call this naïve, but God calls it divine power at work

The dogs were unleashed, the fire hoses turned on and churches bombed, yet the secular civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King Jr. was successful because King insisted on practicing the principles of love—and it worked. It will work for Caesar, too. The best example in modern memory is South Africa. Try it, Caesar; you'll like it.

Andy Rooney on "60 Minutes" (Memorial Day 2006) reflected on the hope that we may come up with something, maybe a new religion, so war is not necessary. Andy, we don't need a new religion. Let's just make the one we have work.

If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend you hate.
—a 6-year-old

D. Lowell Nissley lives in Sarasota, Fla.

The Gates of Dawn

by Ervin Beck

I was teaching expository writing at Lithuania Christian College one day and leading a discussion on my essay "The Ruihley Park Scapegoat," which had been published in *Christian Living* magazine. The question was whether the phrase "like Jesus" in the final sentence of the essay was a good use of an allusion.

I thought it was, as a necessary hint at the larger meaning of scapegoat in my essay about how we beat up a childhood playmate. My professional literary friends in the United States had thought it was not, saying it made too blatant what was already implied in the essay. I expected that kind of discussion with my Eastern European students.

Instead, a Russian Orthodox student said that the allusion was bad because it was an offensive use of Jesus' name, which is too sacred, too holy to be so casually invoked and used in a personal essay. I was taken aback by that comment. But it made me think new thoughts about adoration, worship and Christian faith.

It was a foreign way to worship for me, a rational Protestant, but powerfully moving.

I was confronted by that question again when we attended a Roman Catholic Mass in nearby Kretinga at the Church of the Annunciation, which is attached to the Bernardine Friary, dating from 1602. The church was packed to overflowing with worshipers of all ages, including many children and teenagers, some of whom had to stand in the aisles.

At first, I thought the angelic music during the service came from a recording. Later I realized it was by an amplified chorus of children, dressed in their everyday jeans and sneakers, whom I could not see because they were too far forward and to the side of the altar.

But I did see many adults in the back and on the side aisles, sometimes moving forward toward altars, on their knees, praying. After the Mass, some worshipers stayed in their benches and spontaneously sang antiphonal psalms in an ancient manner.

It was a foreign way to worship for me, a rational Protestant, but powerfully moving—especially when I remembered that the church had been closed by the Russians in 1945, turned into a museum from 1977 to 1992, reopened upon Lithuania's independence in 1992 and is now being restored as the town's main church. The fervent devotion apparent in the service may be related to the community's having been deprived for so many years of its place of worship.

I observed the same devotion even more dramatically one cold morning in December 2006, when I was walking the streets of Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. Suddenly the morning sun broke through clouds and shone in Old Town on the towers of some of the 100 churches in the city as I walked up Ausro Vartu Gatve toward the Gates of Dawn in the old city wall.

In the street I heard organ music and singing and assumed it came from the Church of Saint Teresa, which I promised myself I would return to for Mass. I was looking for the chapel of the Madonna of Mercy, known also as the Black Madonna, over the Gates of Dawn. I finally found the little door in the wall of the Saint Teresa Church, opened it and found the long flight of stairs leading to the chapel.

The stairs were worn smooth by the feet of pilgrims, like those now quietly and slowly moving up the staircase. Some stood in place and said prayers, then ascended a few steps and said more prayers. Some were on their knees, praying and gradually moving up the stairs on their knees. The music I had heard was coming from the chapel, where a priest was singing Mass. It echoed hauntingly in the stairwell.

I slowly moved up the stairs myself, a bit faster than the pilgrims.

At the top I strained to look into the small chapel over the gate, packed with the devout, some on their knees, singing responses to the officiating priest. I stood in the anteroom with those who could not crowd inside. Most of the people

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Fall 2007
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Panorama

The path of God is not always straight

Alan Stucky

When I graduated from Bethel College four years ago I thought I had a plan. I was going to wait in North Newton for a year for my future wife to graduate from college and then we were going to move to Elkhart, Ind., so I could work on my Master of Divinity at AMBS.

As so often happens when God is leading, life took a bit of a detour. So for the last four years I found myself working at Buhler Mennonite Church with a tremendous group of young people and also taking classes at the Great Plains extension of AMBS. Looking back, I can see more clearly the wisdom of God, and would not change my experience for anything.

One of the major reasons that I would not change my experience is that I had the opportunity to take classes with a wonderfully diverse group of people from a variety of stages of life and to take classes through a variety of forms. AMBS offers classes in different forms that have allowed me, and many others, to further my education through multiple settings. Most of my classes have been the somewhat traditional kind that meet on a weekly basis, usually in the evenings. As someone who was working for a church during my study, I found this approach was often helpful because I could have regular contact with the class at a time of the day that actually fit into my schedule.

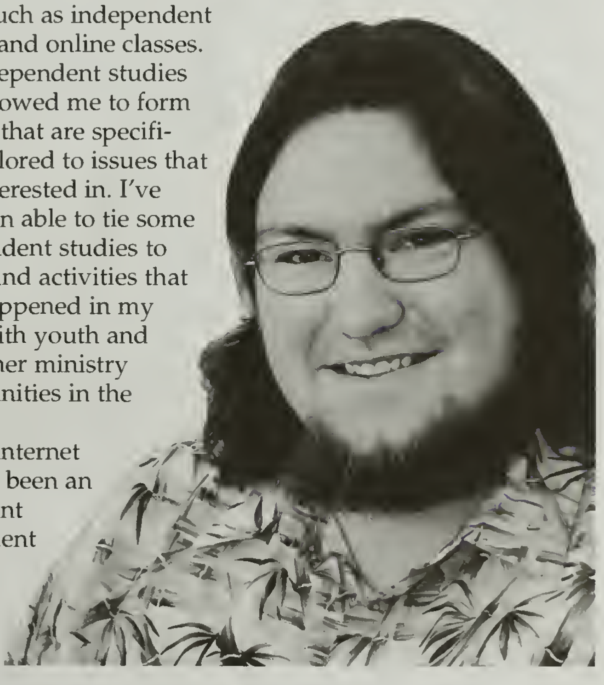
In addition to the weekly classes, each semester I would usually have a class that would meet three or four times for weekends. While these classes were intense, I found them quite rich, partly because of the people who were there. The weekend classes attracted some people who were outside of my geographical area and would otherwise not have been able to attend.

I have also had the opportunity to take classes in more nontraditional forms such as independent studies and online classes. The independent studies have allowed me to form courses that are specifically tailored to issues that I am interested in. I've also been able to tie some independent studies to events and activities that have happened in my work with youth and with other ministry opportunities in the area.

The Internet has also been an important component in many classes. While I have had classes that were entirely online, many of the weekend classes, and some of the weekly classes, have made great use of online discussion forums to expand the discussion beyond the walls of a classroom.

This fall my path of life has finally taken me to the AMBS main campus in Elkhart. I'm looking forward to this atmosphere for new challenges and new opportunities for learning.

Alan Stucky is a student from Buhler, Kansas. He is in the youth ministry concentration of the Master of Divinity degree. ●



Mary E Klassen

Online teaching and learning

Putting good teaching ahead of technology

"Paul was engaged in distance pastoring, using the technology available to him," Jacob Elias, professor of New Testament, said at a recent meeting where AMBS faculty discussed online teaching and learning. This awareness added a helpful dimension to his recent Romans classes as they used today's technology—Internet and e-mail.

While AMBS makes accessible seminary study a strategic goal, faculty work with delivery systems that bring courses closer to people across the continent and even around the world. Online courses are one option—an option that continues raising questions about how well online learning prepares people for ministry.

Gayle Gerber Koontz, professor of theology, took an online course on teaching online courses last summer, and she began the recent faculty discussion emphasizing that pedagogy comes before technology.

Gayle pointed out that good teaching must respect diverse talents and ways of learning, and that "technology permits building multiple pathways to learning."

On the other hand, the questions raised by online courses are significant: Is it possible to build a sense of community among online learners? Can formation for ministry happen online? How can the seminary provide time for faculty to develop online courses, when this requires 50 percent to three times more time than developing a face-to-face course? How can AMBS best provide the technical support needed for students and professors of online courses?

Some students find that online courses give them better opportunities to participate, because they benefit from the additional time to reflect and share comments online if they are not comfortable speaking out in class. The requirement to write comments and reflections can result in deeper learning, AMBS professors have observed.

However, online courses are not better for **all** students, or for all courses and instructors. Some students are not as able to discipline themselves for the independent nature of online learning. Others may not thrive with the high demand for written communication in online discussions. This leads to a higher drop-out rate for online courses.

Another issue important in preparation for ministry is that online courses don't bring students together physically, so the kind of community formed among class members is different. There are ways in which online faculty and students can build community, but it takes more deliberate effort and attention.

Mary Schertz, professor of New Testament, admitted, "It's hard to laugh with your students online."

Because of the tension between the challenge to make courses more accessible and the value of ministry formation in face-to-face learning, AMBS is experimenting with more hybrid courses. These classes meet together two times a semester, with online work in between. (See offerings at right)

Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president, points out on page 4: As AMBS seeks to provide more opportunities for distance learning, we also continue to strengthen on-campus teaching and learning as a base for the other delivery methods. ●

To find out more about AMBS online courses, see www.ambs.edu/academics/courses/online

Gayle Gerber Koontz

Sometimes seminary study involves a truck breakdown in the countryside of Guatemala. The course, Peace and Justice: Latin American Perspectives, took students and AMBS professors Ted and Gayle Gerber Koontz to Guatemala in January 2007. Willi Hugo taught the course at SEMILLA, the Latin American seminary in Guatemala City. This intensive, three-week course is an example of another way in which AMBS offers courses to meet different learning goals. Generally once a year, either in January or summer, AMBS offerings include a course involving encounters with a different culture and country.

Benefits and challenges of online courses:

What students say

"**First,** I liked the fact that students were from around the world. Second, people were reflecting on their readings while still being in the context of their present ministry. "

– *Ray Epp, Yubarigun, Japan, Master of Arts in Peace Studies student who has studied both on campus and online*

"**Online courses** made it possible for me to continue gaining credits without always having to invest days on the road. This was a HUGE benefit for me and almost always outweighed any disadvantages, although I would not have wanted to do all my work online.

"What was challenging was that the computer monitor is "flat" (pun not intended, but also true!), compared to being in a classroom with a live instructor to whom one can ask immediate questions. Profs in a live classroom expound on ideas in a lecture, too, in a way that doesn't happen online."

– *Jane Roeschley, associate pastor of Mennonite Church of Normal, Normal, Ill., 2007 Master of Arts in Christian Formation graduate* ●

Mary E. Klassen

LeNora Klassen Duerksen (holding book) took advantage of the wide range of delivery systems for completing the Master of Divinity degree in pastoral care and counseling. She began taking courses in Kansas at the AMBS–Great Plains extension. She came to AMBS several summers for intensive two-week courses and weekend courses and then moved to Elkhart for periods of on-campus study to fulfill the requirement of completing 30 credit hours in residence in Elkhart. She returned to AMBS in summer 2007 for her last course, From Daniel to Jesus: Early Judaism in the Second Temple Period, a two-week course taught by Steve Schweitzer. She says she accomplished the program of study in "an unusual three years—2004–07—while still a resident of Kansas, maintaining relationships with my husband, cat, dogs, chickens and long-horn cattle!" She now is director of senior ministries at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan., and part-time chaplain at Sunshine Meadows Retirement Community in Buhler.

Other class members shown above are Reuben Glick Shank, Jim Smith and Ruth Kelly.

Extension sites

AMBS–Great Plains
To find out more about the AMBS–Great Plains extension in central Kansas, go to **www.ambs.edu/greatplains.**

A link there opens the course list for 2007–08.

Winnipeg Centre for Ministry Studies
WCMS is an inter-Mennonite partnership on the campus of Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man. Students in WCMS courses can earn credit at AMBS.

See upcoming courses, at **www.ministrystudies.ca.**

AMBS–Iowa
Courses are offered in southeast Iowa. See more at **www.ambs.edu/academics/extension-programs/ambs-iowa.** ●

Not your traditional seminary courses

Hybrid courses (spring)

Principles of Pastoral Care
Daniel Schipani, Ph.D., Psy.D.
Three credit hours.
Meets on campus Feb. 15–16 and May 16–17, with online work in between.

Principles of Youth Ministry
Andy Brubacher Kaethler, M.A., Ph.D. student.
Three credit hours.
Meets on campus Feb. 15–16 and April 18–19 with online work in addition.

Online courses (spring)

Beginning Hebrew: Ruth
Steve Schweitzer, Ph.D.
Four credit hours.
(also offered on campus)

Eastern Christianity
Walter Sawatsky, Ph.D.
Three credit hours.

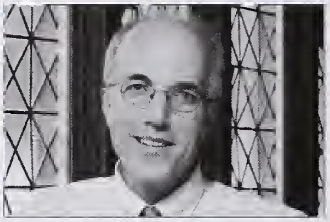
Off-campus course

Celtic Pilgrimage (summer)
June 14-30, 2008
Led by Marlene Kropf, D.Min., and Willard Roth, spiritual director and retired pastor.
Three credit hours (also available for people who do not wish seminary credit).
For more information, contact Rosemary Reschly: rreschly@ambs.edu; 574-296-6244. ●

President's Window

With all the talk about new delivery systems in theological education, it is good to remember that "delivery" cannot be one-way. Education for mission and ministry is not a product that can be packaged at places such as Elkhart and shipped to the world. Leadership formation is a *process*. It demands give-and-take between teacher and student, between theory and practice. For Anabaptists, learning happens with teachers and students accountable to Spirit, Scripture and faith community.

The church is calling on Mennonite seminaries to make pastoral and theological education accessible—geographically, economically and culturally—for places and people currently underserved. AMBS takes this seriously, and we are learning that:



- A seminary changes—for the better—by having more connection with sites of ministry and mission. Theory is good, but practice hones theory.
- While graduate-level degree programs need to remain central at AMBS, we will serve the church best if we also offer non-degree opportunities and collaborate with undergraduate institutions to provide college-level education. Such nontraditional delivery systems allow the seminary to learn from diverse ethnic, cultural and economic groups that have much to teach about evangelism, worship, suffering and community.
- Online learning can be good, but there are challenges. It is more difficult for some online students to feel connected to professors and fellow students, and the dropout rate is higher.
- Hybrid courses (part face-to-face and part online) are more successful and rewarding than courses that are strictly online.
- Keeping a vibrant face-to-face learning community at Elkhart gives AMBS a base from which to offer a online and extension courses elsewhere.

When Jesus called his followers to be witnesses "to the ends of the earth," he probably did not have modern travel and communication in mind. But in this era of globalization, even the classroom extends to the ends of the earth, and theological education can be stronger for it.

— J. Nelson Kraybill

Alumni News

Greg Yantzi (Master of Divinity 1996) was ordained at Harrow (Ont.) Mennonite Church, October 14, 2007.

Karen Weldy (Master of Divinity 2003) was ordained at Southside Mennonite Fellowship, September 30, 2007.

Garry Jost (Master of Divinity 2000) received a Doctor of Ministry from Drew University, Madison, N.J. His project was "Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength: An Authentic Encounter with the Bible in its Original Languages."

Ted Grimsrud (Master of Arts: Peace Studies 1983) is author of Embodying the Way of Jesus: Anabaptist Convictions for the Twenty-First Century (Wipf & Stock 2007). Ted is associate professor of theology and peace studies at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Panorama

Fall issue of *Vision*

Gayle Gerber Koontz, AMBS professor of theology, is the editor of the fall issue of *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology,* focusing on suffering. This journal is copublished by the Institute of Mennonite Studies at AMBS and the Institute for Theology and the Church at Canadian Mennonite University. You can read Gayle's editorial and several articles online at **www.mennovision.org/Volume8-2.htm.**

Mission lectureship

Darrell Guder, leading authority on missional theology, will be featured in the Shenk Mission Lectureship at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, November 30 and December 1. See **www.ambs.edu/news-and-publications/events-and-news/guder.**

Call for presentations

AMBS extends an invitation for proposals for presentations to be given at the conference, "Upgraded? The influence of technology on Christian worship," August 7–9, 2008. See more at **www.ambs.edu/news-and-publications/events-and-news/upgraded.**

AMBS green building featured

The new AMBS Library and Campus Center is featured in the summer 2007 issue of *In Trust,* a magazine for board members of seminaries. The article focuses on four seminaries that are demonstrating good stewardship by emphasizing sustainability. To read the article, to go **www.intrust.org,** and select *Read the Magazine.*

Fall 2007
Volume 18 Issue 1

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor and Designer: Mary E. Klassen

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite.*

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

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Lessons from visiting a church in Lithuania

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there were old women, but there were men and younger people, too. Occasionally tourist types moved faster up the stairs, peered inside the chapel, stood a few moments, then left.

Even after the priest finished the Mass and left, pilgrims crowded into the room to see the image of the Black Madonna, pray for healing and perhaps return later with miniature silver hearts, legs, arms or hands to add to the assemblage beside her, in gratitude for the healing their prayers to her had brought.

I moved slowly into the chapel, feeling at that point more like a pilgrim than a tourist, trying to be inconspicuous in my black garb. I did not peer through the large window for its fine view of Vilnius down Ausros Vartu Gatve. Neither did I examine the painting of the Black Madonna and her collection of healing tokens, as I originally wanted to do.

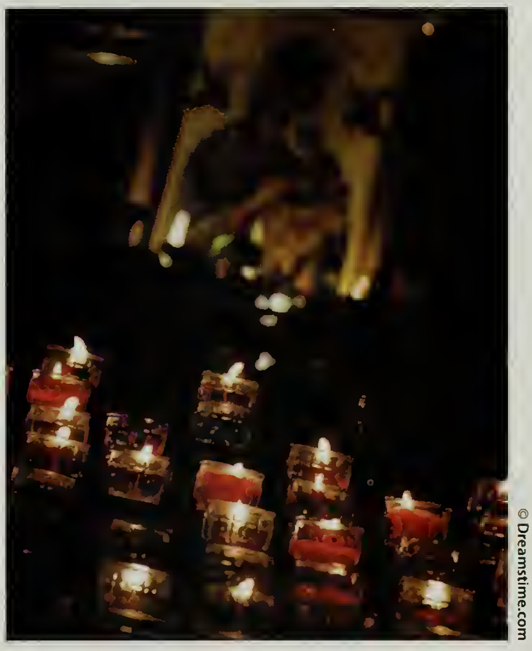
In fact, despite having been there, I cannot really describe the shrine itself. I kept my eyes on the worshipers on their knees. I couldn't bring myself to kneel and pray to the Madonna, but I did pray in my own way. And to honor the spirit of the place, I even genuflected, something I had never before done.

I wondered why such reverence for the sacred, holy and absolute Other has become so foreign—even embarrassing—in my own religious tradition. These people may not seek peace and justice as earnestly as we do. But Christian peace and justice easily becomes the secularist's social action, whereas for the Christian it must stem from faithful adoration and worship of what is holy.

At Lithuania Christian College we have tried to help our predominantly Catholic and Orthodox students see that the Christian commitment to peace and justice is a way for them to renew their faith and fit it to the needy postcolonial, postmodern world they are entering.

The pilgrims to the Black Madonna certainly know what injustice is, and they have suffered grievously from it through the Russian occupation that not only closed their beautiful churches but also deported Lithuanians to Siberia and tortured and murdered their friends and relatives in the KGB building in downtown Vilnius. The pilgrimage to the shrine gives them the kind of peace not available elsewhere.

Christian peace and justice easily becomes the secularist's social action, whereas for the Christian it must stem from faithful adoration and worship of what is holy.



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"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27, NIV).

My musings finished, I went down the stairs into the Gates of Dawn street. Near the shrine I found Sancta, a religious art shop, and bought a candlestick to remind me of the time I joined the pilgrims in Vilnius.

Ervin Beck is professor emeritus of English at Goshen (Ind.) College.

Three decades … and counting

James R. Krabill is senior executive for global ministries at Mennonite Mission Network of Mennonite Church USA.

The average American, according to one recent study, makes eight significant job changes in the course of his or her adult working lifetime. If this is true, then most people find themselves adjusting to radical career disruption and redirection every four to five years.

Maybe that is why some folks—especially those of the younger variety—appear so surprised to learn that I have worked for my denomination's mission agency since I was 25, a period now spanning just over three decades. "Wow, that's just amazing," they often say. But their perplexed, slightly pained facial language often communicates something a little less enthusiastic. I wonder what in the world happened to this poor guy, they seem to think. Who does anything for 30 years? This man really needs to get a life.

In the midst of what seems a helpless situation, I have found hope.

Actually I've had a life—and a fulfilling one at that. Sharing in the joys and sorrows of God's people in seven ministry locations and on three continents, in fact, has far exceeded my wildest dreams and enriched my life in ways I never could have imagined.

It has given me a window for seeing God at work, gathering from around the world a new family in Christ. And in the process, the privilege of participating in the life of this family and encouraging others to consider joining it have become my principal passions in life. All other preoccupations appear insignificant, of little lasting value and ultimately unworthy of the time and energies God has generously placed at my disposal.

It has taken me many years to arrive at such convictions. When I began my international experience in 1976 on the heels of Vietnam and in the heat of the U.S. bicentennial hoopla, I was more than ready to leave behind the cultural arrogance and ethnocentrism my country had come to represent. I was prepared to embrace what I hoped would be more laudable cultural patterns and values found elsewhere in God's world.

At one level, my expectations have been more than met. In each place I have been privileged to live, my life has been blessed richly by aspects of local culture sadly missing in my own.

At another level, however, I have witnessed in each of these places the backside of human existence—mischief and greed, abuse and injustice, and suffering brought on by individual and collective egotism of every insidious variety possible. With time, I have come to accept the pessimistic assessment of one observer who unmasks for us the true nature of our world and its cultural values. "The differences between Western culture and other cultures," he says, "is that in the West, human beings exploit other human beings, whereas elsewhere in the world, it is the other way around."

Yet in the midst of what sometimes seems a helpless situation, I have found hope. This is the hope that comes from meeting men and women, brothers and sisters in Christ, inspired and driven by a larger vision for the world God has so loved. In this vision, lives are transformed, slaves to oppression and obsession find liberating release, and ancient walls of racism, prejudice and hate are trampled under foot as people encounter the crucified and resurrected Lord.

I am sometimes asked by people my age and younger how in this world I can be committed to something as messy as mission. It is time we ask how in a place as messy as this world we can legitimately be committed to anything but mission.

Not our own personal mission, though, or some narrow tribal or nationalistic mission. (We all know well enough what distortions result from such initiatives.) But God's mission, God's cosmic reconciling project, veiled in mystery since the beginning of time but now made clear to us in the life and work of Jesus.

It is this mission alone that is worthy of our time and energies. For it is this alone—in the words of a popular tune by a Nigerian Christian singer-composer—that can produce true "peace in our hearts, peace in our homes, peace in the nation and the world."

Portions of Krabill's comments here are adapted and reprinted by permission from his book, Is It Insensitive to Share Your Faith? *© Good Books (www.GoodBooks.com), pages 146-148.*

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Throwing out the tree**—Anna Groff
- **All our hopes and fears**—Mike Clymer

Students offer energy ideas for church

Robotics team conducts energy audit for South Bend, Ind., congregation.

A team of young minds have ideas to make their church building more energy-efficient. Members of the junior high FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Legos™ League at LaSalle Intermediate Academy in South Bend, Ind., gave suggestions for energy efficiency to Kern Road Mennonite Church members—one of the league's competition requirements.

In the FIRST program, junior high students build robots from Legos™ to accomplish missions related to energy use, as well as conducting an energy audit of a building. With four of the 10 team members attending Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Ind., and adults eager to help, they chose the church building for the audit.

The four who attend Kern Road, ages 9-14, are Brian Sutter, son of Dave and Janice Sutter, pastors of Kern Road; Mark Streeter; Cameron Flanagan and Chris Waggy.

Sutter says they chose Kern Road because of the architects and engineers who attend Kern Road and the access to the blueprints, energy bills, a 3-D model of the building and other resources.

The team presented their findings at a congregational meeting at Kern Road on Oct 21.

"I think they really liked it," Waggy says.

He says their short-term suggestions include outlet covers for insulation, a regular recycling system, dimmer switches and bicycle racks. The long-term suggestions include rainwater collection, solar panels and wind turbines.

The church was built in three stages—in 1962, 1978 and 1997. Most of the problems the building has are from the first section. For example, Sutter says, the hot water boiler, which dates back to 1962, is not energy-efficient, so insulation suffers in the old section. He says he thinks it was better to have the energy suggestions come from young people in the congregation.

"I had never seen anyone younger than 30 present at the congregational meetings," he says.

The project was a two-way street, with the children on the team and the adults brainstorming together. The team worked with members of Kern Road's Sustainable Living Group, a group of people who want to look at the environment and live more responsibility.

"When this group found out about the energy audit the kids were doing, they were excited," says Deanna Waggy, member at Kern Road and one of the coaches. "Most of their meetings have concentrated on their own lives, ... but they have also talked about the [church] building being used so little during the week but lots of energy still being used."

Photo provided

Brian Sutter runs the Legos™ robot while teammate, Kyle Rice (in background), programs it to complete the mission.

John Martens, one of the group's members, and his wife are installing solar panels in their home, and he has done a lot of research on wind turbines, so he could offer information to the team. Ron Troyer, of the Troyer Group, also met with the team and provided suggestions. The Troyer Group designed Kern Road's large worship space and other additions over the past 30 years.

For example, when the children suggested a wind turbine for the church, he helped them see the pros and cons and what size turbine would be realistic. Troyer says he explained Indiana's weather situation, with cloudy days making many solar energy systems "nonviable" but good options in terms of the environment and sustainability.

It is difficult for people to see the eventual payback when the initial costs for energy-efficient systems are so high, while the utility costs are still reasonable, he says. In contrast, the West and East Coast electric utility costs are triple what Indiana is being charged.

However, there are short-term options such as insulated window blinds, an awning system for summer shading and allowing for passive solar heating in the winter, energy efficient fluorescent lighting and low-flow plumbing fixtures.

If these less-costly suggestions are implemented, the kids will see their ideas being used, which should instill a sense of pride and "allow them to actively direct the church family in green strategies," he adds.

At the regional competition on Nov. 17, the team won first place overall and one of the top three presentations. They go to the state tournament on Dec. 8.—*Anna Groff*

> The kids will see their ideas being used, which should instill a sense of pride and allow them to actively direct the church family in green strategies.
> —Ron Troyer

ROMEOs: Retired Old Men Eating Out

Harrisonburg, Va., group is second chapter after Indiana men's gathering.

Jim Bishop

Members of Harrisonburg, Va., ROMEOs meet in a local restaurant (left to right): Glendon Blosser, Harold Kuhns, Addison Brainard, Dwight Hartman, Millard Showalter and Harold Huber. Absent is H.D. Swartzendruber.

Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou, Romeo? For an answer to that age-old question, Juliet need look no farther than the IHOP restaurant in Harrisonburg, Va., on Monday evenings or the Daily Grind in Park View on Friday mornings. That's where you'll find the Harrisonburg chapter of the ROMEOs or "Retired Old Men Eating Out."

The seven members take advantage of IHOP's 50 percent senior discount on Monday nights, but that's not their main reason for gathering.

Each group member has lost the love of his life, through illness or accident, in recent years. They enjoy the food and fellowship, tell stories and laugh, but most importantly they give and receive support to help ease their lingering sense of loss.

In October 2005, Addison Brainard, Dwight Hartman, Charles Shenk and H.D. Swartzendruber from Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg began meeting weekly at IHOP.

"We were a diverse group," Swartzendruber says. "But we knew each other to some extent at Park View and were each recently widowed, which proved to be the common bond that helped us begin sharing on a personal level."

A month later, Swartzendruber learned that a similar group of widowers who met regularly in Goshen, Ind., call themselves the ROMEOs. The group became the "Harrisonburg chapter."

In early 2006, Barbara Moyer Lehman, associate pastor at Park View, suggested that group members might benefit from meeting with Jim Glanzer, a counseling practitioner at Family Life Resource Center.

For nearly a year, the ROMEOS met Friday mornings with Glanzer at the Daily Grind. Harold Kuhns, another Park View Church member, joined the group, followed by Harold Huber of Broad Street Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg.

"Having a professional counselor leading the discussions who had also been widowed proved quite beneficial," Swartzendruber says. "Jim was able to draw us out to speak openly about things that we wouldn't generally share, even with close friends and relatives."

In addition to Brainard, Hartman, Huber, Kuhns and Swartzendruber, other members are Millard Showalter from Lindale Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg and Glendon Blosser from Weaver Mennonite Church, also in Harrisonburg.

"In general, men have difficulty sharing feelings on a deep level," says Showalter. "Women seem more comfortable in doing this, but after losing a spouse I feel like we become more vulnerable and open to talking about difficult issues."

Huber says, "We don't talk a lot about our spouses, but the subject does come up, and we're able to process our feelings of loss and what it means to be alone."

Two members recently remarried. Charles Shenk moved back to Columbus, Ohio, and got married in February. Swartzendruber remarried in September.—*Jim Bishop*

Ross T. Bender and his Indiana ROMEOs

I am grateful to the group for including me and making me a part of its joyous fellowship. I am also grateful to be a part of the Wednesday morning breakfast. Although I can no longer drive a car, the others provide transportation for me not only to breakfast but also to medical appointments and occasional shopping runs. It is clear they do not consider me a bother or a burden but value my presence. They help me accept that I am not an invalid or *invalid* but still a whole person, even though I must cope with a medical problem. I am still loved and able to be a loving person, still teach and learn, still contribute to others and receive from others. My ROMEO brothers keep me from being diminished or shrinking as the walls of my world keep closing in on me, literally and socially, culturally and intellectually.

I am continually stimulated by our conversations, by the reports of their forays into the wider world and by their travels. I, too, have traveled extensively in the past and can share out of that awareness as well as out of my reading and other sources. They keep me from withdrawing from those around me and retreating into my inner world. They help me preserve my personal dignity at a time when it appears to be threatened or violated through loss of privacy or loss of autonomy and growing dependence on others. They are an effective antidote to depression. They keep hope alive.

For more information about ROMEOs, see my book *Tending and Mending the Creation*, which tells of my experience with Parkinson's disease.—*College Mennonite Church (Ind.) Newsletter*

Redesigned *timbrel* offers stories, color

Mennonite Women USA's magazine still prioritizes 'local-global connections.'

In efforts to release the power of story into women's lives, the staff of Mennonite Women USA redesigned *timbrel*. Staff members rebirthed the magazine, first created in 1998 by former editor Cathleen Hockman-Wert. They hoped to retain some of the earlier flavor of publication—a strong emphasis on local-global connections and mission and service pursuits. At the same time, they strove to give it a new focus and look. Formerly a two-color publication, it is now a longer, full-color magazine.

One of the strongest redesign priorities is to dedicate the first six to eight pages to human interest stories that tell how women of faith grow in and struggle with their faith, says current editor Laurie Oswald Robinson. This priority grew out of a year of meetings with consultants and a survey that revealed human interest stories as compelling for readership of all ages and backgrounds.

"I know Christian women are hungry for soul-tending in our society, and telling our stories is an important way to heal people and restore the tattered threads of people's lives into some kind of tapestry they can understand," she says.

"In the 21st century, we have begun to understand how the scientific model of pulling things apart left people grasping for how to put things back together. A story, with all its elements of spiritual mystery, is one way of restoring a sense of spiritual wholeness."

Another priority was a forum for women of all ages and backgrounds to be in dialogue with God and with each other. The new tagline says, "Women in conversation together with God." Each issue has a "sister question." The question asks women to write a 100-word reflection on the upcoming theme. A sampling of those responses is published.

Rhoda Keener, Mennonite Women USA executive director, says: "Demographics have really changed throughout the church, including women's groups. When Cathleen first birthed the magazine, subscriptions came primarily from women's groups. *timbrel* replaced two publications, *Window to Mission* from General Conference's Women in Mission and *Voice* from Mennonite Church's Women's Missionary and Service Commission. Today, 32 percent of subscriptions come from individuals.

"We recognize that many women want to relate to God and to other women but don't do that through traditional women's groups. This would include younger women who have full-time careers and can't go to daytime groups as well as newcomers to the Anabaptist church who don't have the long-held connections of family and church family."

timbrel
timbrel
timbrel
Finding Community

Covers of the last three issues of the redesigned *timbrel* magazine.

The magazine strives to attract readers of all ages—whether individually or as groups. Any group of 10 women who subscribe together receives a lower rate. Oswald Robinson is striving to elicit the talent of younger writers as well as using many tried and true writers.

One of *timbrel's* new columns, "Home, Hearth and Health," invites columnists of all ages to address current spiritual and psychological wisdom relating to our homes, health, families and church families. Another new column, "Culture, Clips and Kudos," uses two writers in their mid-20s to early 30s to review books, movies and the other arts.

To keep the magazine focused on the grass-roots realities of women's lives, a column called "Three Windows, Three Women" includes short commentaries written by women from three age categories—20s-30s, 40s-50s and 60s and above—about each issue's theme.

Another change with the redesign is that it is no longer a shared publication with Canadian Women in Mission. However, it is staying connected to the Canadian sisters through a new column, "Across the Border, Across the Ocean" with columnist Heather Block from Manitoba and articles from women around the world.

Oswald Robinson hopes the redesigned publication has retained the best of the old and offers some additional elements. But most important, she hopes the magazine will be a connector of women of all ages and backgrounds in this needy age.

"Women throughout the centuries have always needed each other," she says. "But because of our increasingly isolated society, it may be more difficult for women to forge relationships. We want *timbrel* to be one stone in that bridge they walk to each other and to God."—*Mennonite Church USA*

I know Christian women are hungry for soul-tending in our society.
—Laurie Oswald Robinson

A day care in Bolivia 'celebrates life'

Fiesta on Aug. 31 marks Samuelito Day Care Center's first anniversary.

Ryan Miller

Ely Masabi with children at the Guarderia Samuelito Day Care Center in Santa Cruz, Bolivia

> **It might be better to mold young lives in positive ways rather than attacking ingrained habits.**
> **—Margrit Kipfer Barrón**

Through Guarderia Samuelito Day Care Center, love and laughter touch the lives of many children born into desperate circumstances in Santa Cruz, Bolivia's largest city. This ministry of Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Boliviana (Bolivian Evangelical Mennonite Church) finds much to celebrate in the midst of daily struggles to survive.

On Aug. 31, a grand fiesta marked Samuelito's first anniversary.

The president of the Bolivian Mennonite Church, Léonidas Saucedo, shared a message of how God uses what the world considers insignificant to create lasting change. Day-care personnel and children led worship and performed traditional dances to honor a year of ministry among some of the most vulnerable citizens of Barrio La Moliendita, a neighborhood on the outskirts of Santa Cruz.

"We, of course, know that poverty is a complex problem with no simple answers," says Margrit Kipfer Barrón, who helped the church begin the day-care ministry while serving under the Bolivian Mennonite Church through Mennonite Mission Network. She named colonialism and globalization as two root causes of the system that oppresses the families of Samuelito's children.

"The thing is, we can't undo in a few months what has been done during 500 years of history. What we can do is try to help with the resources we have, and that's often starting with the most obvious needs and then if the opportunities arrive going deeper," Kipfer Barrón says.

Going deeper includes finding excuses to celebrate life. During its first year, the day-care center also threw parties for birthdays, Mother's Day and even turned a hygiene workshop into a festival.

Three-year-old Darling and her baby brother, Hector, arrived at Samuelito in March. Because their 19-year-old mother was inexperienced, single and had little income, the children were in "a terrible state," says Yuneth Vargas de Moreno, director of the day-care center. "The baby was malnourished, and the little girl was very thin. She didn't talk at all."

The mother had separated from the children's father, a drug addict who was physically abusive. Day-care services permitted the mother to resume afternoon classes to complete her education. Mornings she cleans the school she attends to provide for her small family.

Samuelito personnel are working with Darling and Hector's parents to help them make lifestyle changes. More than 90 percent of the children attending Samuelito live with single mothers.

Five educators and a cook—aided by volunteers—make up Vargas de Moreno's team. The day-care facility, housed in the Esmirna Mennonite Church building, and its staff are stretched to maximum capacity by the 41 children they currently welcome five days a week. Every Friday a wooden classroom divider must be removed and tables, cabinets, materials and mattresses stowed away to make room for Sunday's worship. Then, early Monday morning, the lifting and carrying of furniture drains the energies of the Samuelito teachers even before the children arrive.The church dreams of buying land and building a more adequate structure to house Samuelito's children.

Originally from Switzerland, Kipfer Barrón has served jointly with Mennonite Mission Network (Mennonite Board of Missions prior to 2002) and the Schweizerische Mennonitische Mission (Swiss Mennonite Conference) since 1993.

Because the church places high priority on leadership training, national youth now direct these ministries, permitting Kipfer Barrón to invest her energies in programs for younger children.

"In the church, we work so hard to help heal people of the results of poor self-image that are manifested in alcoholism and other addictions, I think it might be better to mold young lives in positive ways rather than attacking ingrained habits. That is one of the reasons we started the day-care center," Kipfer Barrón says.

The Bolivian government supplements staff salaries and contributes dry staples. Mennonite Central Committee's Global Family program also helps fund the day-care center. The children's families pay one boliviano a day—about 13 cents. *—Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network*

SALT volunteer learns, serves in India

Mary Stata is one of Mennonite Central Committee's 51 SALT participants.

Mary Stata, a recent college graduate from Rochester, N.Y., was looking for a challenge when she traveled to India in August to teach English through Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) SALT program.

Three months later, Stata says her SALT assignment is both challenging and rewarding and, above all, a learning experience, as she adjusts to a new culture and way of life.

Mary Stata

Stata is one of 51 U.S. and Canadian young adults participating in 11-month international assignments through SALT, which stands for Serving and Learning Together. Another 61 international young adults are serving one-year assignments in the United States and Canada through MCC's International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP).

Stata teaches English to nursing students at Dhamtari Christian Hospital, which was founded a century ago by Mennonite missionaries in rural, central India. Stata says one of the first challenges of her assignment was learning to put on a sari, the traditional outer garment of Indian women.

"It's four meters of fabric that are just wrapped around your body to magically create a dress that looks really nice, but it's very difficult to get used to wrapping it nicely," she says.

The language barrier has been another daily challenge. Many of Stata's students speak very little English, while she is only beginning to learn Hindi.

But Stata says many of her students are persistent and eager to converse in English.

Stata and her students often talk about cultural differences between India and the United States. For example, arranged marriages are common in rural India, and some students were surprised to learn that this was not the case in the United States.

Stata notes that poverty is a serious problem in Dhamtari, the town where she lives. Many of her students do not have seemingly ordinary things like textbooks or mattresses.

However, Stata reports that she is learning to appreciate the joys of life in India. In her blog, Stata writes: "I am discovering the beauty of the daily rhythm of life here—wrapping my sari bleary eyed in the morning, dodging geckos on the path as I walk to breakfast, enjoying a cup of chai with Nani (my Indian grandma). ... I could go on and on. Sometimes I have to pinch myself, because this country is so beautiful. From the multicolored saris to the rice paddies, India is breathtaking. I don't intend to dismiss the prominent presence of poverty. I'm merely trying to paint a more holistic picture of my experience here."

Stata and other participants in SALT and IVEP are writing about their experiences online at blogs.mcc.org/vep.

An audio interview with Stata is also available online at mcc.org/podcasts.—*Tim Shenk for Mennonite Central Committee*

Shuffleboard

Retirement is not all fun and games – it can be fun work.

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Partnership offers loans to entrepreneurs

Web site lets donors extend micro-credit to businesses in developing countries.

Mennonite Savings and Credit Union and Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) are launching the next phase of a partnership forged in 2000 with the development of a co-branded Web site that invites MSCU members to provide micro-loans to entrepreneurs in one of the world's developing countries.

MEDA Trust makes microfinance more real to the average person.—Ed Epp

MEDA Trust creatively links donors in North America to entrepreneurs around the world through its Web site, www.medatrust.org, giving those who want to help the chance to become involved in the world of microfinance.

MSCU first partnered with MEDA as a significant investor in the Sarona Global Investment Fund.

This new partnership was announced at MEDA's 2007 "Business as a Calling" convention in Toronto early last month by Ed Epp, MEDA's vice president for resource development.

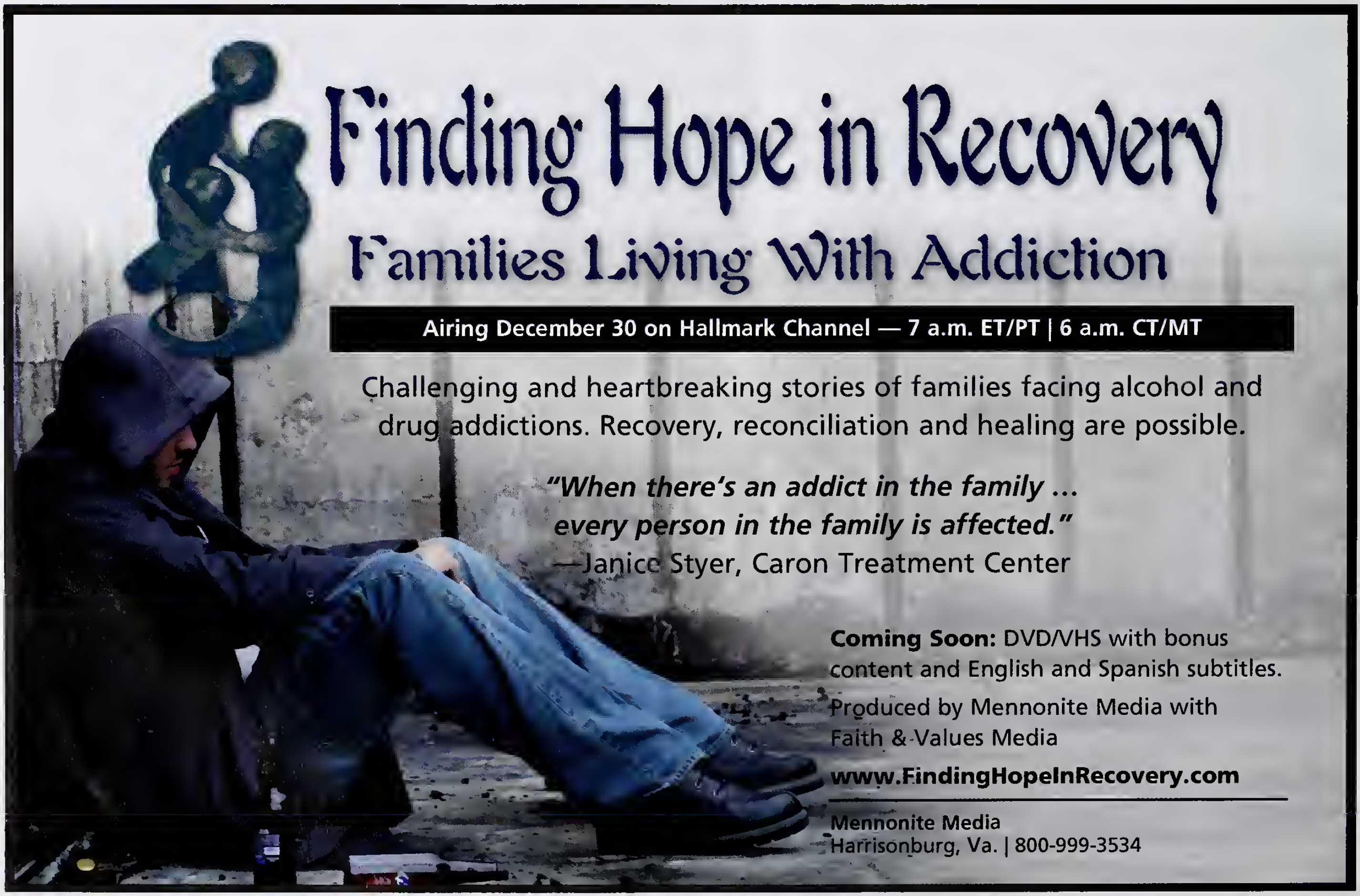
"MEDA Trust makes microfinance more real to the average person," said Epp, sharing his thoughts on the program. "It brings the dignity and work of entrepreneurs in other countries home."

MEDA and MSCU are inviting the credit union's 16,000 members to participate in the program.

This program provides the working poor with many opportunities, including experiencing the dignity gained by being able to financially provide for themselves and their families.

Nick Driedger, MSCU's CEO, added that "this partnership is a strong reflection of our commitment to leadership in providing capital for economic development. We do this well at the local level, and MEDA is the right partner for MSCU to make a difference in the global community."

The Web site, www.medatrust.org/mscu, allows MSCU members to set up a virtual portfolio through which they can choose clients from a real microfinance institution to fund.—*MEDA*



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Bethel board of directors authorizes campaign

A $21 million campaign includes improvements to one of the college's historic buildings.

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., has launched a $21 million financial campaign that includes major capital improvements to one of the college's historic older buildings.

Photo provided

The front of the Old Science Hall on the Bethel College campus, which will be renovated into an academic center with classrooms and faculty offices; a nursing wing will be added on the east side

At its Oct. 5 meeting on campus, the Bethel College board of directors authorized the campaign that includes the following three main components:

- renovate the Old Science Hall, completed in 1925, and add a nursing wing to the structure to create a state-of-the-art Academic Center housing seven departments, at a total of $8.5 million;
- increase the current endowment of the college by $8.5 million in order to strengthen core programming; and
- provide ongoing support for the Bethel College Fund (current fund) at $4 million.

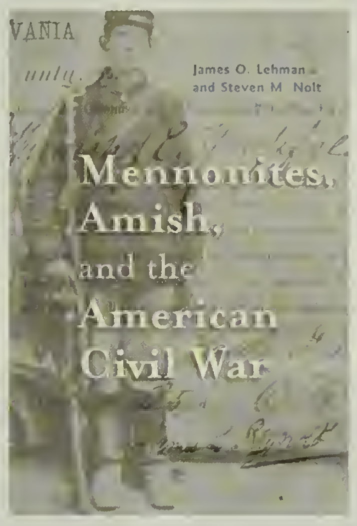
The campaign now enters a "quiet phase," during which major donors will be contacted and lead gifts solicited. A public phase of the campaign will follow.

"Bethel's constituents express great enthusiasm for the restoration of a solid, beautiful building that is part of Bethel's long history," says Sondra Bandy Koontz, Bethel vice president for advancement. "They find this 'recycling' of a building to be a good use of college resources. Our constituents see a new nursing facility as one way to reflect Bethel's mission and its Mennonite value of service."

"Testing the feasibility of a major campaign with donors was a highlight of my first year as president," says Barry C. Bartel, president. "There is strong enthusiasm for each component of the campaign.

"It is particularly fitting that the campaign seeks to raise equal amounts for the Academic Center and for endowment," he adds. "Both are extremely important as we continue to strengthen Bethel to continue providing an excellent education centered on a residential environment with opportunities for participation."

The timing of the campaign complements developing plans for marking an upcoming milestone anniversary for Bethel College—125 years in 2012. Bartel recently announced that Keith Sprunger, Oswald D. Wedel Professor Emeritus of History, has agreed to author a new history of the college. The last major one was published in 1954. An advisory committee consisting of Sprunger, Robert Kreider, James Juhnke, John Thiesen, John Sheriff, Dale Schrag, Mark Jantzen and Penelope Adams Moon will guide the project.—*Melanie Zuercher of Bethel College*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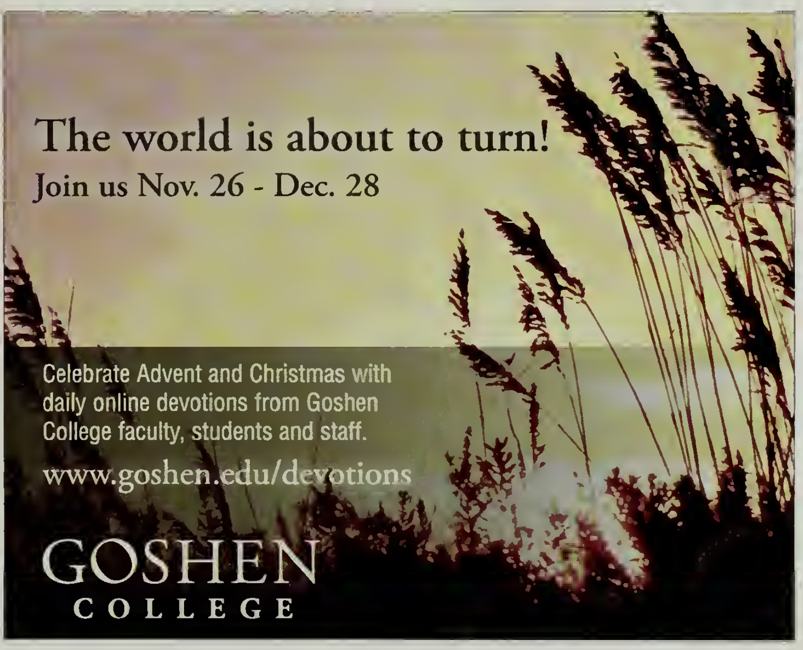
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WORKERS

Gonsman, Elsie, was ordained as pastor at Roaring Spring Mennonite Church, Roaring Spring, Pa., on July 15.

Hess, F. Hunter, was ordained as lead pastor at Zion Mennonite Church, Souderton, Pa., on Sept. 16.

Leatherman, Jane Miller, was licensed for chaplain ministry by East Goshen Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on Oct. 28.

Roth, Scott, was licensed as pastor of evangelism and outreach at New Eden Fellowship, Schwenksville, Pa., on Oct. 12.

Santiago, Frantz, was ordained as pastor at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Reading, Pa., on Oct. 7.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Froese, Morgan Elizabeth, Nov. 5, Greg and Lisa Hawkinson Froese, Inman, Kan.

Haddad, Sophia Rose of Sharon, Nov. 1, to Peter and Deborah Kilheffer Haddad, Scottdale, Pa.

Herber, Eliza Koop, Nov. 6, to Breck Herber and Lisa Koop, Chicago.

Hershey, Blaze Evan, Sept. 20, to Jason and Kimberlee Vivian Hershey, Washington, D.C.

Hoover, Joshua Michael, Oct. 23, to Mike and Cathy Miller Hoover, Akron, Ohio.

Kaufman, Nicholas Stigge, Sept. 29, to David and Sydney Stigge-Kaufman, Gainesville, Fla.

Kennedy, Tessa Jane, Nov. 4, to Thomas and Kristel Wenger Kennedy, Lititz, Pa.

Kinsinger, Jonathan Dean, Oct. 19, to Jared and Stephanie Benning Kinsinger, Wellman, Iowa.

Mast, Isaac Galen, Nov. 4, to Anthony and Dawn King Mast, Goshen, Ind.

Nolt, Eli Bencsik, Oct. 15, to Todd and Jessica Bencsik Nolt, Sugar Grove, N.C.

Sawatzky, Isabel Lucille, Aug. 31, to Damian and Marla Sawatzky Rowe, Newton, Kan.

Sawatzky, Levi Christian, Nov. 4, to Joseph and Anna Leichty Sawatzky, Mthatha, South Africa.

Schlabach, Audrey Jane, Oct. 8, to Brad and Angie Miller Schlabach, Sarasota, Fla.

Stutzman, Maya Kathryn, born July 24, 2005, received for adoption on Aug. 29 by Mike and Tanya Hill Stutzman, Sarasota, Fla.

Thiessen, Brooke Anna, Nov. 1, to Greg and Heather Reinert Thiessen, Inman, Kan.

Thomas, Dillon Jay, Oct. 29, to Richard and Stacey Miller Thomas, Quakertown, Pa.

Vardaman, Jovie Shea, Nov. 2, to Jeff and Janet Burford Vardaman, Elkhart, Ind.

Weaver, Claire Helene, Nov. 1, to Joe and Julie Underhill Weaver, Canal Fulton, Ohio.

Witmer, Benjamin Daniel, Oct. 18, to Jerry and Tiffany Good Witmer, Dalton, Ohio.

MARRIAGES

Bontrager/Hooley: Julia Maxine Bontrager, White Pigeon, Mich., and L. Joe Hooley, Lancaster, Pa., Nov. 3, at Church of Christ, White Pigeon.

Bontrager/Rensberry: Margaret Bontrager, Ashley, Mich., and Eugene Rensberry, St. Johns, Mich., Oct. 6, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Ashley.

Hollinger/Pearce: Brian Hollinger, New Holland, Pa., and Deborah Pearce, Lancaster, Pa., Nov. 2, at Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Moser/Roggie: Matthew Moser, Croghan, N.Y., and Rachel Roggie, Castorland, N.Y., Oct. 13, at Croghan Mennonite Church.

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Tilahun/Zaugg: Abel Tilahun, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Isabelle Zaugg, La Jara, Colo., Aug. 1, at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

DEATHS

Bubalo, Sylvia G. Gross, 78, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 30. Spouse: Vladimir L. Bubalo. Parents: Titus L. and Olive S. Moyer Gross. Funeral: Nov. 2 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Habegger, Marden C., 90, Reedley, Calif., died Oct. 30. Spouse: Marianna Ensz Habegger. Parents: Alfred and Barbara Habegger. Children: Alfred, Martha Longoria, Valerie Habegger, Eric; four grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 3 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Hershberger, Dorothy Mae Steiner, 82, State College, Pa., died Sept. 21 of complications from several strokes. Spouse: Truman V. Hershberger. Parents: Frank and Edith Caroline Gregory Steiner. Children: Tim, Sue Miller, Louise Metzler; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 24 at Koch Funeral Home, State College.

Hills, Ronald C., 73, Croghan, N.Y., died Nov. 4. Spouse: Imelda M. Widrick Hills. Parents: Robert C. and Helen Dobson Hills. Children: Larry, Philip, Mark; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 7 at First Mennonite Church, New Bremen, Lowville, N.Y.

Kniss, Esther Mast, 84, Harrisonburg, Va., died Oct. 28. Spouse: Paul G. Kniss. Parents: John and Rebecca Hartz Mast. Memorial service: Nov. 3 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Kreider, Earl H., 89, Manheim, Pa., died Nov. 11 following a brief illness. Spouse: Martha Root Kreider (deceased). Parents: Amos H. and Miriam Herr Kreider. Children: Lois K. Miller, Melvin R., eight grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 16 at East Petersburg Mennonite Church, East Petersburg, Pa.

Kropf, Clarence Joseph, 87, Albany, Ore., died Aug. 28. Spouse: Naomi Schmucker Kropf. Parents: Ezra and Ida Eash Kropf. Children: Alta, Dale; two grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 1 at Lebanon Mennonite Church, Lebanon, Ore.

Maust, Emma L. Fisher, 97, Pigeon, Mich., died Nov. 10. Spouse: Joseph Maust (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Ida Miller Fisher. Children: Myra Gerstenschlager, Joseph, Doug; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 13 at Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church, Pigeon.

Rensberry, Eugene H., 73, St, Johns, Mich., died Oct. 8 of a heart attack. Spouse: Margaret Bontrager Rensberry. Spouse: Katherine DeBarr Rensberry (deceased). Parents: Herschel and Beatrice Essner Rensberry. Children: Diane Johns, Michael, Victor; nine grandchildren; several great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 12 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Ashley, Mich.

Roth, Lester, 84, Archbold, Ohio, died Nov. 6. Spouse: Dorothy Blough Roth (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Barbara Roth Roth. Children: Ruth Short, Jean Hawk, Richard, Kenneth; 19 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 10 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Sommers, Nellie Margaret Hostetler, 80, Plain City, Ohio, died Nov. 9. Spouse: Elvin J. Sommers. Parents: Asa and Ida Miller Hostetler. Children: Clell, Arley, Nedra Steiner, Collette Whitmer, Lambert; 14 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 12 at Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City.

Stauffer, C. David, 60, Reno, Nev., died June 22 of heart and respiratory failure. Parents: Uriah M. and Edna L Troyer Stauffer. Children: Christina Martinsky, Michael, Jennifer Black; four grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 3 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Weaver, Doris L. Charles, 54, Lititz, Pa., died Oct. 31 of multiple sclerosis. Spouse: Kenneth J. Weaver. Parents: C. Earl and Anna Mary Landis Charles. Children: James, Stephen, Michael, David. Funeral: Nov. 5 at Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

"For the Record" is available to members of Mennonite Church USA. To submit information, log on to www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit information by email, fax or mail:

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Eastern Mennonite University seeks qualified candidates for the position of ***provost***. The provost serves as chief academic officer of the university as well as supervises numerous administrative offices. The responsibilities of the provost include providing leadership and vision for internal functions of the university and developing cooperative relationships among university programs, departments and divisions. The provost assists the president in representing the university to church, community and educational constituent groups. Qualifications include earned doctorate; successful teaching, leadership, administrative and interpersonal experience at a college or university level; membership in or willingness to affiliate with an Anabaptist congregation; and knowledge of the Mennonite church and an understanding of and commitment to the mission of Mennonite/Anabaptist higher education. To apply send a letter of application, curriculum vitae and three references to Loren Swartzendruber, President, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; Email lorens@emu.edu. For more information, visit our Web site: www.emu.edu/humanresources.

Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., is seeking candidates for a current open position of ***full-time youth pastor***. Responsibilities include program coordination and ministry for high school and middle school youth groups (25-30 members each) and other general pastoral tasks. For more information, contact Merle Hostetler at 574-534-4006 or merle@im.mennonite.net.

Goshen College seeks ***full-time, tenure-track assistant or associate professor of biology*** with August 2008 start. Specialization in biology/molecular, biology/microbiology. Exceptional teaching skills, mentoring students, collaboration within and across disciplines and academic leadership experience needed. Develop undergraduate research program attractive to students with biomedical interests. Ph.D. required; college-level teaching experience preferred; interest in teaching in a small liberal arts college; strong interest in undergraduate research; support of the core values and mission of Goshen College. For application instructions, see position announcement at www.goshen.edu/employment Web site. Goshen College is an EEO/AA employer seeking a diverse faculty and staff.

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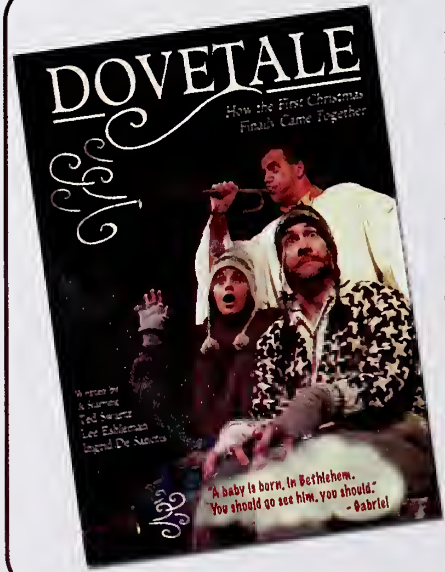
Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership seeks a ***full-time Web content manager*** to join its communications team. The Web content manager will play a key role in developing and enhancing Mennonite Church USA's Web presence as well as ensure that content on the denomination's Web site is consistent with Mennonite Church USA's priorities and overall communications strategy. This position provides a unique opportunity to impact and impart Mennonite Church USA's mission, goals and resources through technology and multimedia. The ideal candidate will possess strong interpersonal communication skills and work well within a team. She or he should be detail-oriented and possess a good understanding of communication theory and strategies. At least two year's experience in Web-oriented work is desired along with demonstrated writing and editing skills. Fluency in Spanish is highly desired. For a detailed job description or to submit a resumé, cover letter and work samples, contact Executive Leadership Human Resources at HR@MennoniteUSA.org or call 866-866-2872 and ask for Executive Leadership Human Resources. Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership is an equal opportunity employer and encourages women and racial/ethnic people to apply.

Goshen College seeks ***project director for center for intercultural teaching and learning*** to begin early 2008. Ph.D. or Ed.D. preferred, master's degree required along with at least three years administrative experience with higher education experience preferred. Expertise required in intercultural education, project management, development, research management and financial management. For application instructions, visit www.goshen.edu/employment. Goshen College is an AA/EEO employer committed to Christian values as interpreted by the Mennonite church.

Eastern Mennonite University invites applications for a ***nine-month continuing faculty position in the MA in counseling program***. The 60SH program is CACREP accredited in community counseling and strives to achieve the highest standards of professional excellence in providing psychologically and spiritually grounded training for counselors. Earned doctorate in counselor education or a closely related discipline is required in addition to an equivalent of three years full-time counseling experience. Virginia licensure/eligibility and graduate teaching experience needed; ability to teach assessment is preferred. For consideration, send a letter of application addressing stated qualifications, curriculum vitae, official transcripts and names/contact information of at least three professional references to: P. David Glanzer, Ph.D.; MA in Counseling; Eastern Mennonite University; 1200 Park Road; Harrisonburg, VA 22802; glanzerd@emu.edu; 540-432-4244; www.emu.edu. Review begins immediately; position begins August 2008. EMU complies with federal/state requirements for nondiscrimination in employment with regard to sex, age, race, color, disability and national origin. We seek applicants who bring diversity.

Executive director: **Fairview Fellowship Home** in Fairview, Okla., seeks an ***executive director*** (with an administrator's license) to lead its150-resident and $5 million-budget campus. Reporting to the board of directors, the new executive will provide leadership to this Mennonite Brethren-affiliated campus with 126 health-care beds and 32 independent-living units. Submit inquiries to Caryn Howell: MHS Alliance, 234 S. Main St., Suite 1, Goshen, IN 46526, 574-537-8736, or carynhowell@msn.com.

Salem Mennonite Church, located near the growing community of Tofield, Alta. (45 minutes southeast of Edmonton), is seeking a ***lead pastor*** to minister to our congregation of 125 people. The successful candidate will have previous pastoral experience and/or a bachelor of theology degree or equivalent. Compensation will be commensurate with qualifications. Interested people should forward their resumés to: Carla Fendelet, secretary, Salem Mennonite Church, Box 56, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0; fax 780-662-0106; email cgfen@telus.net.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The Garden Chapel of Victory Gardens, N.J., of Franconia Conference is seeking a ***part-time, bivocational pastor***. The congregation is located in a small integrated community, 40 miles west of New York City. The congregation reflects the multiethnicity of its community. Responsibilities include preaching, teaching, congregational and community ministry. For further information please contact Ertell Wigham at ertellw@fmconline.org.

Bluffton University invites applications for a ***full-time, tenure-track faculty position in social work*** beginning fall 2008. Ph.D. or ABD preferred. MSW degree from an accredited social work program and minimum of two years of practice experience is required. Should have or be eligible for Ohio's practice license at licensed independent social worker level. Should demonstrate effective teaching skills and experience. International experience is a plus. Responsibilities include: teach a range of introductory, human behavior social environment, micro and macro-practice, interviewing theory and technique, human diversity and policy courses. Serve as director of fieldwork activities, placing students for spring semester internships and providing orientation for new field instructors. Scholarship is supported and service activities with community/church are encouraged. Review of applications begins Jan. 7, 2008, and will continue until an appointment is made. Compensation is commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. Send letter of interest, curriculum vita or resumé, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee or if necessary from placement office) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Academic Affairs, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. See www.bluffton.edu. Bluffton University welcomes applications from all academically qualified people who respect the Anabaptist/Mennonite peace church tradition and endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

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Swamp Mennonite Church seeks a passionate ***full-time senior pastor*** to focus on preaching, pastoral care and equipping leaders. SMC is a Christ-centered, welcoming church (regular attendance of 140) that is a fellowship of believers committed to serving our community, living in peace and making Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and worship relevant in the Quakertown, Pa., area. Seminary training is required. Interested people should email the pastoral search committee at swampsec@fast.net.

Goshen College invites applications for two ***full-time, tenure-track faculty positions*** in the music department, to begin fall 2008:

Voice and choral conducting: Conduct Goshen College chorale and men's choir; assist with opera productions as needed; teach applied voice; teach courses in vocal pedagogy and class voice as needed; possible assistance with teaching courses in music education and supervision of student teachers.

Orchestra conducting and music education: Direct GC orchestra, wind/brass ensemble; direct the orchestra for GC opera productions; teach music education courses and supervise student teachers; assist with administering adjunct teachers in the instrumental area; teach other courses depending on the candidate's qualifications and departmental needs in a liberal arts setting. Terminal degree required for tenure. For more information and application instructions, visit the Goshen College Web site at www.goshen.edu/employment. Review of applications begins on Jan. 7, 2008, and will continue until the position is successfully filled. Minority people are especially encouraged to apply.

Tabor College seeks ***full-time mathematics faculty*** starting August 2008. Doctorate preferred. Must have a passion for teaching, mentoring and advising undergraduate majors, affirm Tabor distinctives as an Anabaptist Evangelical Christian college and articulate personal Christian commitment. Complete position listings at http://www.tabor.edu. Send a letter of interest to lawrencer@tabor.edu.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.20 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.

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The values we pass on to our children

Regina Shands Stoltzfus is a dissertation fellow at Goshen (Ind.) College during this academic year. She is working on a doctorate in theology and ethics at Chicago Theological Seminary.

Like most of the families I knew as I was growing up, ours was a household in geographic, economic and cultural transition. My schoolmates and I were first-generation northerners, our parents having migrated from the segregated South in search of work and the promise of better living conditions. Our parents, and the stream of relatives who followed them—doubling up in kids' bedrooms and sleeping on cots wherever space could be made—worked hard, sometimes at two or even three jobs. They bought homes, raised children and encouraged them to work hard. A consistent message, spoken and unspoken, was the expectation that each generation should "do better" than the last. In many ways they bypassed comforts that might have been available to them in order that our lives would not be as hard. And it has indeed been so.

I am grateful for the opportunities available to me because of the generation that nurtured me. I have not always been so grateful and have not always understood the depth of the sacrifice that was made for me, and others like me, who can be considered comfortably middle class. I'm sure at times my parents thought I spurned the gifts their hard work offered me, even as I was trying to live the values they and our church community taught me.

For instance, I postponed completing my college education in order to do a term of voluntary service overseas. One year turned to two, and at the end of the second year of service I questioned the value of a college education when there was so much "real work" to do in the world. These many years and a couple of degrees later, I recognize the exuberance and idealism of youth, yet I still live within that tension.

Lately I have been involved in conversations that raise a challenge for Christian families that seek to promote peacemaking and justice building as an integral part of their faith commitments and to pass those values, that identity, on. How does a family resolve the tension between doing what seems good for the family, in particular good for children, and also participate in God's mission in a hurting world? Put even more bluntly, how easily do we submit our children to the ideals and values that we hold?

On the surface, this seems simple. As parents we teach our children the values of our faith that have been handed to us, either by the families that raised us or the communities we have joined. This is who we are, we say, and because this is who we are, this is what we do. And as my parents did, you work hard so your children will have a chance at a "good" life.

But it makes a significant difference if our families of origin struggled and worked hard, scrimped and saved and made sacrifices in order to move out of poverty or working-poor status, or pushed against societal constraints. What if, as is true for many of my peers, because of those sacrifices, we now have options that were not available to our parents?

How does a family resolve the tension between doing what seems good for the family and also participate in God's mission in a hurting world?

I am part of a small, intergenerational group of people reading through Shane Claiborne's book *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as An Ordinary Radical.* It is a challenging experience, particularly for a group of people who attend a church that is situated within a poor neighborhood but for the most part are not poor ourselves. As we seek to live into a mission that teaches an ethic of existing somewhere between simple living and voluntary poverty, what is our responsibility, what is our message, to our own children?

The question seems particularly pertinent for those in the sandwich generation—still raising children (and maybe grandchildren) while also caring for aging parents. What is "enough"? Less, I suspect, than we are led to believe.

The implications spread far and wide; they encompass decisions about the neighborhoods one chooses to move into, the schools families and congregations support and send our children to and economic parity among our sister congregations in North America and across the globe. These are not easy conversations, but they are necessary ones. May God give us the grace to initiate and the boldness to continue them. TM

Recovering Jesus: The Witness of the New Testament by Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld (Brazos Press, 2007, $22.99) offers an accessible and thorough introduction to the life of Jesus. Yoder Neufeld provides a comprehensive approach without overwhelming the introductory reader or student.

Jesus, the Gospels and Cinematic Imagination: A Handbook to Jesus on DVD by Jeffrey L. Staley and Richard Walsh (Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, $19.95) summarizes 18 popular Jesus movies and shows where each parallels the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life.

The Way the World Is: The Christian Perspective of a Scientist by John Polkinghorne (Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, $16.95) argues as a scientist and a theologian that Christianity presents a credible and compelling worldview that can be taken seriously even while fully recognizing the importance of science.

Christianity and the Social Crisis in the 21st Century: The Classic That Woke Up the Church by Walter Rauschenbusch, edited by Paul Rauschenbusch (HarperOne, 2007, $27.95), is a 100th anniversary edition of the classic book. Each chapter is accompanied by a responding essay from a contemporary Christian writer, including Phyllis Trible, Tony Campolo, Joan Chittister, Stanley Hauerwas, Cornel West, James A. Forbes Jr., Jim Wallis and Richard Rorty.

The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus' Birth by Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan (HarperOne, 2007, $22.95) is an account of the Nativity narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke that focuses on discovering the actual literary story the Gospels tell. The authors believe that 2,000 years of history have biased our reading of the texts.

A City Upon a Hill: How the Sermon Changed the Course of American History by Larry Witham (HarperOne, 2007, $24.95) offers a unique view of America through the lens of history's most powerful sermons and the surprising ways many of them became critical events in the growth of the nation.

Asphalt Jesus: Finding a New Christian Faith Along the Highways of America by Eric Elnes (Jossey-Bass, 2007, $22.95) chronicles the experiences of a group of progressive Christians led by pastor Elnes who walked 2,500 miles from Phoenix, Ariz., to Washington, D.C., in 2006, seeking to foster conversations along the way about what it means to be a Christian.

Ain't Too Proud to Beg: Living Through the Lord's Prayer by Telford Work (Eerdmans, 2007, $16) encourages readers to bring the Lord's Prayer to bear on their interactions with and attitudes toward the contemporary world. It is an ecumenical, evangelical, postmodern, irenic exploration of prayer as a theological process.

The Uncreated Light by Solrunn Nes (Eerdmans, 2007, $25) explores the beauty and truth found in icons of Christ's transfiguration. The transfiguration of Jesus Christ, she writes, is an especially rich subject in the abundant iconographical tradition of the Eastern Church. It includes full-color plates of the icons discussed.

The Way Is Made by Walking: A Pilgrimage Along the Camino de Santiago by Arthur Paul Boers (InterVarsity Press, 2007, $15) is the Mennonite seminary professor's reflections on the spiritual renewal he experienced walking the 500-mile pilgrimage in Spain. It's a story of learning to pray in new ways, embracing simplicity, forming community, living each day centered and focused, depending on God to provide.

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Everett J. Thomas

We can do better with Advent

They shall name him Emmanuel, which means, "God is with us."—Matthew 1:23b

The best way to observe the Advent season: Wait and pray specifically for God to intervene in the ugliness and sin around us and the sin and selfishness within us. In doing so, we can anticipate what it will mean to experience new measures of God's presence.

But December is a messy month. It is a hodgepodge of carols and images that confuse the meaning of the season. The four weeks of Advent fall victim to this confusion.

To understand the Advent season, we must imagine we are the Israelites of Isaiah's day (and hearing about this "Emmanuel" to which Matthew refers). These faithful Israelites yearned for relief from an oppressive world and for a king that would rule with integrity and justice. They waited in expectation and hope for this new era, this new and holy kingdom. The plaintive tones of the hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" suggest the longing they felt.

But each December in our culture, any remnants of this longing are diluted with "Jingle Bells" and "White Christmas." In a better world, only secular seasonal music would be played in commercial settings, and carols that celebrate Jesus' birth would be reserved for Christian worship services. Furthermore, carols that refer to the Nativity would be sung only on Christmas Day and afterward—the Christmas season from Dec. 25 to Jan. 6. But few of us observe the Christmas season and, consequently, December turns into a mishmash of images and messages.

Perhaps the Advent season has little meaning because we live on this side of Jesus' birth, ministry, death and resurrection. We have felt God with us many times and cannot relate to the longing that would have been part of the era before Jesus was born.

But there are many ugly elements in our world that we can long for God to remove. There are ugly elements in ourselves for which we anticipate God's healing presence. So how do we enter the Advent season? Here are some suggestions:

- Ask God to come into our world, where Christians are pitted against Muslims.
- Ask God to come into our country, where shrewd political parties inflame neighbor against neighbor.
- Ask God to come into our homes, where depression and abuse hide behind closed doors and closed relationships.
- Ask God to come into our hearts, where sin and selfishness expel God's presence.

The last verse of the hymn says it for us:

O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind.
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease.
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

The Advent season is the beginning of a new church year; this mostly ignored season can remind us to wait in anticipation for the new ways God will be with us in this next year.—*ejt*

This mostly ignored season can remind us to wait in anticipation for the new ways God will be with us in the next year.

An Advent yearning for peace

Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office staff members have created free Advent resources focusing on a call for prayer and action for peace this Christmas season.

The resources include a congregational Advent litany using Isaiah 2:2-5 and *Leader* magazine's Advent worship themes as well as a petition for peace between Iran and the United States. Both resources are available electronically at www.MennoniteUSA.org/peace. A letter sent with the resources offers suggestions on how congregations can use the litany and petition in Advent worship planning and offers a free peace lamp to the first 100 Mennonite Church USA congregations requesting one.

"Our hearts ache as we continue to long for peace," say Susan Mark Landis, peace advocate for Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership, and Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach, director of the MCC Washington Office, in a letter sent by email to Mennonite Church USA area conferences and congregations Nov. 15. "We invite you to make visible your yearning for peace by joining Mennonite Church USA congregations across the country, praying and petitioning for peace."
—*Mennonite Church USA*

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The Mennonite

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new ways to celebrate Christmas

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How to love as Jesus loved

Kenneth Thompson is pastor of Friendship Community Church, Bronx, N.Y.

God calls the church to proclaim and portray the redeeming, transforming power of a personal faith in Jesus Christ for all people. Some people are enjoying good times; they have much and their needs are few. Others are enduring bad times; they have little and their needs are many. Both experiences, the good and the bad, happy and sad, need to be ministered to.

But what can we do? Is there anything that will help us, a humble people called for a missional purpose, become successful in touching people with God's hope and healing? How can we share a relevant faith that reaches people where they live? What can invite everyone into true heart-peace and reconcile people of different experiences into one community?

The answer is to love as Jesus loved. Regardless of a person's position or condition, all need to experience Christians loving them with God's love.

Jesus shared with his disciples what they needed to know to be successful in life and ministry after his departure. John 13-17 records Jesus purposefully and movingly sharing what we need today to be successful in reaching people. He speaks enthusiastically of a ministry within us for life, more than of the ministry "through" or "upon" us for great works. Each of us in the church has gifts and callings, peculiar graces specific to the assignment we receive from the Lord. But as the church, God commands us all to the same standard of holiness, and that holiness is the presence of Christ within. He is the "common unity" we have, and his love is the "sameness" we share.

What about the ills of society? Are we not called as advocates for its healing? Healing and other great works comprised only a third of Jesus' public ministry. The overwhelming majority of his life and ministry was given more to modeling God's love than to working miracles. Good works accompanied him, but love and mercy are his overwhelming characteristics. Are we not called to speak prophetically and take a stand that speaks truth to power? Shall anyone take a stand before others to speak if he isn't known for bowing his knee before God to listen? Be a prophetic peacemaker, but be a peacemaker with a pure heart.

Some say, "Brother, what world do you live in? Wake up to reality." But if they understood the way Jesus revealed and modeled God's love, they would realize nothing is more real, more practical, more transforming. Someone may say: "The shy and the weak talk of love. These times demand that people get moving and be led by a man with a plan." He doesn't realize it takes courage and strength to love as Jesus loved. Even with an action plan, no one can truly liberate another without knowing how to love freely.

God's love is not shy, weak or simplistic; its height is equal to its depth, and its endurance is matched by its generosity. What is God's love? Philosophically, it is his redemptive, creative goodwill that transforms independent people and their systems into an interdependent, empathetic community, resulting in a harmonious society. Practically, it is expressed by joyfully choosing, individually and corporately, to take an action that promotes the well-being of another; it is doing what is most beneficial to the recipient at the moment of need; it is helping create a desired quality of life and maturity, a willingness to inconvenience oneself for another's true benefit.

This is what Jesus revealed about God's love and that is how he modeled it. Let's not be content to say what he did but do as he said. For the sake of your neighbor across the street and around the world, be willing to love as Jesus loved.

TheMennonite

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Cover: Photo illustration by Dee Birkey

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Grateful for response to Muslim leaders

I am grateful to James Schrag for the excellent response to the Muslim leaders' letter (Readers Say, Nov. 20). In his letter, James also speaks for me.—*Allen Linscheid, Reedley, Calif.*

Editor's note: For more information about both letters, see page 32.

Advent is a time to go, not wait

I agree with Everett J. Thomas' statement that we can do better with Advent (Editorial, Dec. 4) but in a different way. Advent was that time in history when the people of God waited for the Messiah. Advent is the name given to the four Sundays before Christmas Day. Advent is that time of year when we try to pretend that Christmas hasn't happened. Advent is what has replaced Christmas on Sunday mornings in church. Every year in December we are told Advent is a time of waiting.

I've tried to listen carefully, but the only thing I can determine that we are waiting for is to celebrate. But Christmas is way too much to celebrate in just a few days or one or two weeks. We need most of the month to do it justice.

For the Christian, Advent is history. We know about Advent because we have experienced it. We can review history, but we cannot relive it.

Advent is for that part of the world that has not experienced Advent. They are waiting, not for God to do something, but for us, the children of the light. God does not have another son to send. The only place I know where Jesus told his disciples to wait, was to wait for the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, the message of the New Testament is, "Go." It is appropriate to review from where we have come and the world into which Christ came, but the real business is proclaiming that light.

Four weeks of Advent and one week of Christmas is a ratio that should be reversed. We need to celebrate and use that celebration as a springboard to be missional. The world is waiting for us to show them the Light. Let's change the focus of Advent from "wait" to "go."—*Dwight A. Kauffman, Pandora, Ohio*

Pet-blessing goes too far

I am trying not to be judgmental. God knows I have enumerable flaws myself. Still, the Nov. 20 article entitled "Pets Celebrated and Blessed at Church" has been gnawing at me (pardon the pun).

Celebrating animals can be part of God's wonderful creation. I, too, am an animal lover. I grew up on a farm where my parents taught me a healthy respect for animals. I have experienced many of the animal-lover-blessings the author listed. However, blessing specific animals in the church went a bit far for me.

I am troubled by this because I see a trend in our society (and wealthy societies around the world) to value animals equal to or above people. I find it absurd that many pets in this country are provided for better than the average person in many societies (including many communities right here in the United States.) I am sickened by the thought that more people are interested in pet rescues on *Animal Planet* than by the rescue of children from abusive and neglectful homes. I am disgusted by TV show hosts blubbering about a pet adoption gone bad. I avoid watching this kind of stuff, so when I read this article I had to ask myself: Am I alone on this? Will a pet blessing ceremony be an annual event in our Mennonite congregations?

I am concerned when we, as people of God, are serving and blessing our pets as much or more than those human beings God commanded us to love and serve: children, the elderly, teenagers and middle-aged, the poor, the outcast and those despised by society.

Animals are great ice-breakers. I encourage all pet lovers to use their pets to get to know people with whom you meet. Let your pet help you build relationships with people around you. Your relationship with your pet is not a bad thing unless there is a real, live person who needs you more.

As a former elementary school teacher and adoptive mom, I'm sure there are some little (and big) people who need our time, attention, money, love and blessings more than do our pets.
—*Kristi Goering Hiltbrunner, Jerome, Mich.*

IN THIS ISSUE

The church is made fresh [through God's Spirit], covering over last year's blemishes," James Schrag writes in his Leadership column (page 18). Several examples of this freshness: An African-American church establishes a ministry for poor people in its neighborhood; the ministry serves more white people than people of color (page 20). The oldest Mennonite conference in the Western Hemisphere celebrates with a buffet of the ethnic food traditions from its members and translates its annual sessions into three languages (page 19). In South Africa, 16 North American Mennonites joined workers from Philipstown to renovate a church that is one of the oldest structures in the town (page 21). "We didn't trust whites," says Aubrey Badula, foreman of the church's building project, "but … they came and slept in our houses. They accepted—even enjoyed our food. They worshiped God with us. This is what built strong relationships."—*Editor*

Meeting in Annapolis offered nothing new

Last month's conference held in Annapolis, Md., has the potential to directly affect the lives of the Palestinians and Israelis with whom Mennonite Central Committee works. Whether this change will be for better or worse remains to be seen.

Hosted by the U.S. government and attended by representatives from more than 40 countries, the conference was held Nov. 27. In reality, the gathering was more an announcement of a new series of discussions to be held in 2008 than an attempt to work at any substantive issues.

One critical question that remains is whether these substantive issues—such as a shared Jerusalem, the rights of refugees and the viability of a Palestinian state—will be on the table in future discussions.

These have not been seriously addressed in previous "peace processes," and there is cause for skepticism as to whether they will be this time around. For while U.S., Israeli and Palestinian political leaders speak eloquently of peace, events on the ground point in a different direction. Israel continues to encourage settlements in the West Bank in areas with the most fertile land and water, and the "security wall" has sliced off large portions of the West Bank, effectively annexing them to Israel.

In July, Mennonite Central Committee prepared a discussion paper on Palestine-Israel. Based on input from Palestinian and Israeli partners, it outlined principles that must be upheld if a just peace will be realized in the region. These included respect for human rights, justice and security for refugees; a shared Jerusalem; an end to Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem; an end to confiscation of land and water resources, and the dismantling of the separation barrier.

Time will tell whether these principles will be honored in the follow-up meetings in 2008—whether there will be merely peace or a truly just peace. For the sake of Israelis and Palestinians whose daily lives are affected by the outcomes of political leaders, we must pray fervently that it will be the latter.—*Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach, director, MCC U.S. Washington Office*

Church should address 'draft' of taxes

Scott Key (Speaking Out, Nov. 6) lists some important ways to work against war and for peace. In mentioning war tax resistance, he expresses a common misconception that employees cannot prevent their employers from withholding federal taxes from their paychecks.

However, it is possible to limit or stop withholding by increasing withholding allowances on the W-4 Form (or legally writing "Exempt" on the form if you did not owe federal income taxes last year and do not expect to owe in the coming year). See the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee's "practical" publications on the Web site nwtrcc.org on controlling federal tax withholding and on low income or simple living for helpful information on ways to keep from paying for war. On the same Web site, click on the 2008 War Tax Boycott, Withhold from War/Pay for Peace to find ways to participate in this national effort to defund war.

The "draft" of federal tax money to pay for present, past and future wars is a fundamental issue that our church should address as it works to replace suffering, destruction and injustice with healing and hope. The military draft affected only young men. The current "economic draft" affects young men and women who enter the military to try to get out of poverty. The draft of tax money affects people of all ages as long as they have a taxable income.

If everyone in just one congregation refused to pay for war and redirected their refused taxes to an underfunded social service, imagine the opportunities for witness and change that could occur. —*Susan Miller Balzer, Hesston, Kan.*

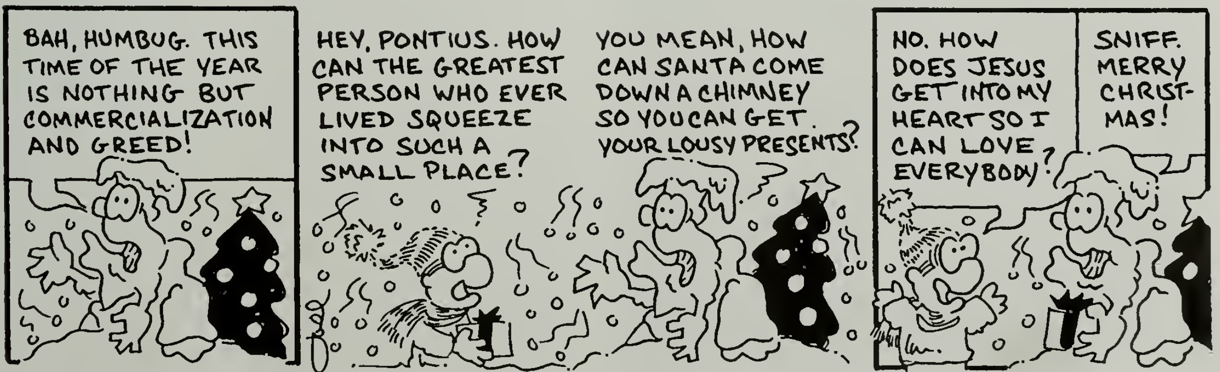
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Regarding our family's gift exchange tradition: (34 responses)

- ○ We exchange on Christmas morning. (41 percent)
- ○ We exchange on Christmas Eve. (18 percent)
- ○ We exchange on Jan. 6 (Epiphany). (0 percent)
- ○ We exchange whenever we can get together. (35 percent)
- ○ We do not exchange gifts. (6 percent)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


BAH, HUMBUG. THIS TIME OF THE YEAR IS NOTHING BUT COMMERCIALIZATION AND GREED!
HEY, PONTIUS. HOW CAN THE GREATEST PERSON WHO EVER LIVED SQUEEZE INTO SUCH A SMALL PLACE?
YOU MEAN, HOW CAN SANTA COME DOWN A CHIMNEY SO YOU CAN GET YOUR LOUSY PRESENTS?
NO. HOW DOES JESUS GET INTO MY HEART SO I CAN LOVE EVERYBODY?
SNIFF. MERRY CHRISTMAS!

IN BRIEF

The green machine

"God has already invented a device to pull greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere. It's called a tree."
—Christopher Shore in *The Marketplace*

Technology leaves people out

Church of the Brethren publisher Wendy McFadden has created her own Facebook page and explains why. "As technology has changed at a dizzying pace in recent years," McFadden writes, "I have tended to be a little cautious, keeping in mind that choosing to progress technologically always leaves some people out. But ... *failing* to adopt new technology [also] leaves some people out."
—*The Messenger*

A road sign?

Goshen (Ind.) College professor John D. Roth wrote the Foreword for Conrad Kanagy's book that emerged from the 2006 Church Member Profile. Among Roth's warnings: "Despite a strong affirmation for the principle of the missional church, there is little evidence today that Mennonites are all that eager to actually share the gospel with their non-Christian neighbors.—*Road Signs for the Journey*

Denomination cuts pastors' health insurance

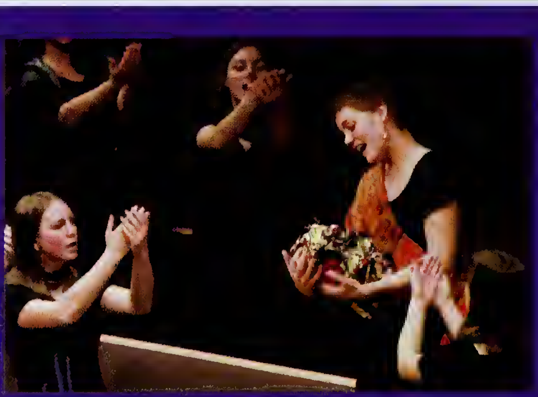
While Mennonite Church USA works on a new health insurance plan for its pastors, delegates in another Anabaptist-related denomination have canceled theirs. At its annual conference last summer, the Church of the Brethren decided to end its medical insurance plan for pastors on Dec. 31.

The decision "has created anywhere from a ripple effect to a riptide effect [with a] deep sense of loss and pain," says Mary Jo Flory-Steury, director of the denomination's General Board Office of Ministry. Walt Wiltschek, editor of *The Messenger,* quoted Flory-Steury in his December editorial and said there are several reasons for the plan's demise, but "an above-average number of pastors deemed 'high risk' were in a plan without enough 'good risk' pastors to balance them out."

Last July, 93.4 percent of Mennonite Church USA delegates voted to continue working on a plan that would provide health insurance for Mennonite Church USA pastors. At that time, Executive Leadership staff members said they would not know for two years whether such a plan will be feasible.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Exchange program within global South

STRASBOURG, France/AKRON, Pa.—A South-to-South exchange for young people is being described as "the missing piece" in a group of programs for Anabaptist young adults. YAMEN! (Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network), the third program, is a joint Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) venture.



Jodi H. Beyeler

Prayers for new life

During the Festival of Carols held Nov. 30-Dec. 2, members of the Goshen (Ind.) College Women's World Music Choir sing the song "Denko" from Mali. The song is about a woman who wishes to have a child and about the prayers offered to bring forth new life. The festival, videotaped and edited by students, will air in Indianapolis and northern Indiana on Christmas Day.—*Goshen College*

For many years North American young people could travel and work abroad in MCC's SALT (Serving and Learning Together) program, and North Americans hosted young people from many countries around the world in another MCC program, IVEP (International Volunteer Exchange Program). Both programs are administered from MCC's binational office in Akron.

But there was no learning and service exchange program between Anabaptist young people within the Southern Hemisphere until MWC and MCC joined forces and launched YAMEN! in 2001. Now YAMEN! is being restructured. MWC and MCC continue to work at details on funding, facilitating and accountability.

The program for single young adults ages 18-30—primarily but not exclusively in the global South and who are committed to service and to church-to-church relationships within the global Anabaptist family—now has one-year terms (August through July). Applications, with the support of the applicant's local church, are made through in-country MCC offices where a committee of church leaders and MCC staff processes them and forwards them to MCC's international headquarters. Placements always have a connection to an Anabaptist church or MCC partners in the host country.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Bethel College students recovering

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Two Bethel College students injured in separate automobile accidents during the school's Thanksgiving break (News Digest, Dec. 4) are recovering in Wichita, Kan., hospitals.

Sunita Pudasaini underwent successful reconstructive surgery on her injured hip Nov. 27 and has been moved out of surgical intensive care into rehab. She will likely not be able to put any weight on her hip and leg for a couple of months. She still has lots of pain in her right leg, but doctors are hoping it will resolve in time. The movements of her right leg are also affected.

"Sunita and Anil [her fiancé] remain overjoyed for her saved life and healing, despite the long recovery she faces," says Bethel College campus pastor Amy Barker. "Sunita offered no complaints, only thanksgiving for all our prayers. Anil has been working at a hospital in Chico, Calif., and hopes now to find a nursing job in Wichita in order to remain nearby."

Brittany Voth had surgery Dec. 4 to close her abdomen following repairs made to her colon and urethra, but further surgery was required on Dec. 12 to repair a leak around a tube installed. The good news is that Brittany's arm is healing on its

shley Williams

50 wheelchair, delivered

ylin Leticia Matamoros was born with her left foot positioned
ar her hip. A Personal Energy Transportation (PET) wheel-
ir enables her to live a normal and productive life. Meylin
es near Mateo, Honduras, and received her wheelchair from
by and Chris Goering's PET-Kansas factory in Moundridge,
n. For $250 each, Kirby delivered 120 PETs to Honduras in
e last year. Kirby and his wife, Chris, are members of Eden
nnonite Church in Moundridge. They designed the PET for
e by land-mine victims and people with disabilities in devel-
ing countries where normal wheelchairs are not usable
cause of road conditions.—*Jeanne Jacoby Smith*

own, so there is no arm surgery to anticipate.

"Brittany has recovered remarkably since her surgery and is now talking and is quite herself," says Barker. "Thanks be to God."—*Bethel College*

AIMM moves administration to Africa

ORODARA, Burkina Faso, and KINSHASA, Dem. Rep. of Congo—Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) Partnership Councils held in Burkina Faso and Democratic Republic of Congo were planned to empower African churches and promote mutuality in mission.

These annual gatherings brought together mission representatives from Canada, France and the United States and national church leaders from Burkina Faso Sept. 19-20 in Orodara. Many of the same mission personnel traveled to Kinshasa Sept. 28-29 for similar meetings with leaders of the three Congolese Mennonite denominations. A three-year old Partnership Council structure moved decision-making to the African continent.—*AIMM and Mennonite Mission Network*

Young adults begin ecumenical project

ORRVILLE, Ohio—Operation Orrville Church Visitation kicked off Nov. 11, when members of the young adult Sunday school class from OMC (Orrville Mennonite Church) visited Orrville Baptist Church for the morning young adult Sunday school time. The leader of the class, David Barber, led the group in a study of Galatians 3.

The young adults at OMC hope to meet other young adults in the Orrville area for fellowship with other members of Christ's church in order to create a more unified Christian witness to the neighborhood. For more information, go to http://orrvillemenno.net/ya/. Other small groups may consider similar projects as a way to meet other members of Christ's body in their community in order to grow in faith while sharing Christ's love with their neighborhoods.—*Denver Steiner*

Henry Dueck had passion for people

WINNIPEG—Henry Dueck showed a passion for people and for the Word of God. He dedicated his life to mission work that lasted for more than 40 years, including voluntary service after retirement. With his wife, Helen, Dueck served in various educational and pastoral capacities—primarily in Latin America—through the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM), a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network. Dueck died Nov. 4 in Winnipeg after an eight-year struggle with cancer.

Dueck was born Oct. 17, 1927, in Coaldale, Alta., one year after his parents, Jacob P. and Susanna Dyck, arrived as refugees from Orenburg, Russia. The Dueck family, like other Mennonite immigrants, struggled to eke a living from the land. When Dueck was 9, his mother died, and three years later his stepmother also died.

Dueck pastored the Mennonite Brethren Church in Kelstern, Sask., before the family went to Brazil through the Mennonite Brethren Conference. They worked from 1960 to 1969 with German-speaking Mennonites in Curitiba and helped initiate mission work in the Brazilian state of Santa Catarina. In 1969, the Duecks began working with COM. Over the next 23 years, they served in Uruguay, Bolivia and Paraguay.
—*Mennonite Church Canada Witness/Mennonite Mission Network*

—*Compiled by Everett J. Thomas*

IN BRIEF

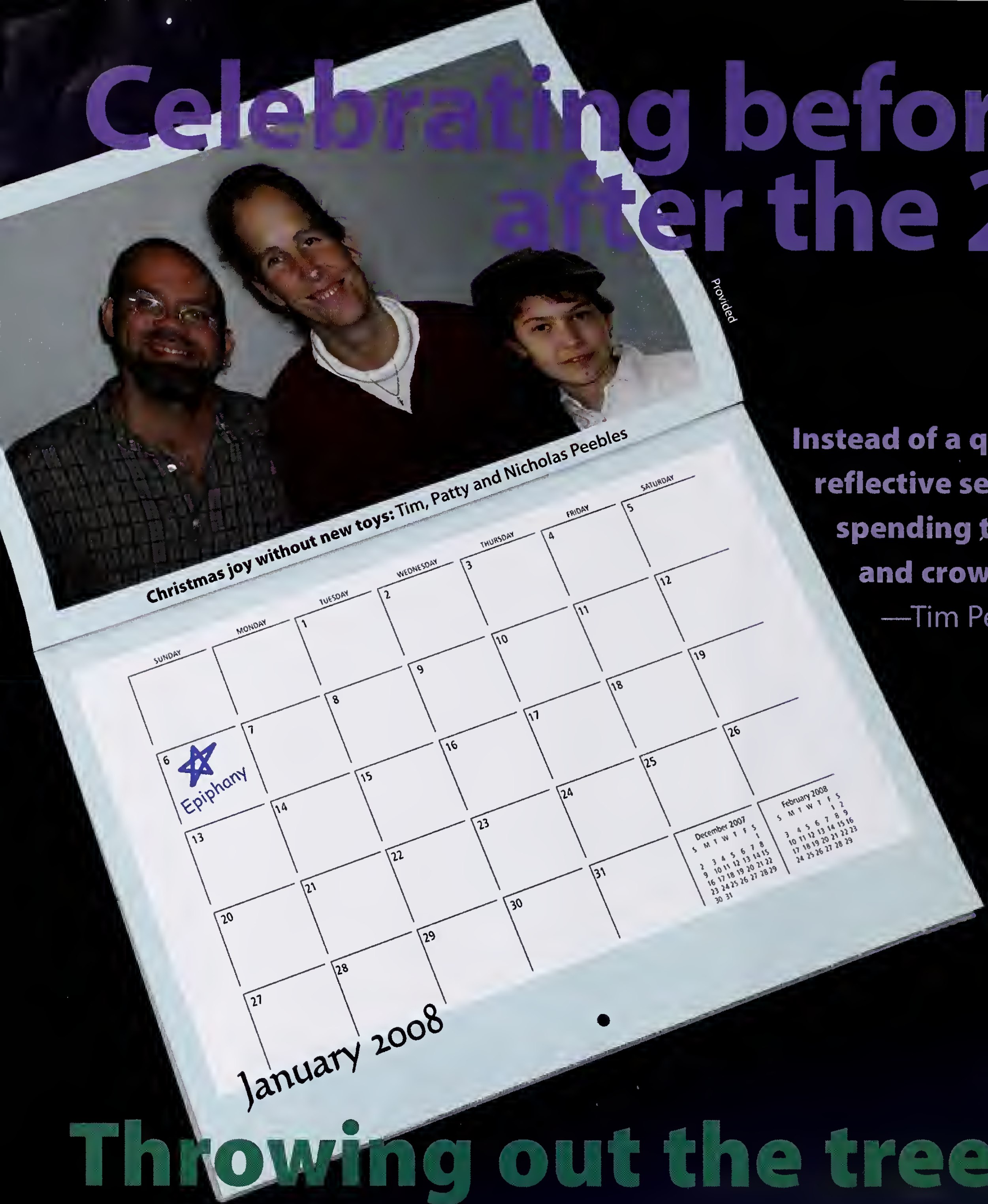
National debt

During the Nov. 27 debate between U.S. Republican presidential candidates, Sarah Lederach, who relates to Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church, asked about spending and the national debt. Moderator Anderson Cooper directed the question to candidate John McCain and asked, "Senator McCain, have Republicans forgotten how to control spending?" McCain said, "Absolutely. … We spent $3 million to study the DNA of bears in Montana—I don't know if that was a paternity issue or a criminal issue."—*http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2007/11/28/question-2528-what-will-you-do-to-tackle-the-national-debt-and-control-spending/*

Pressure at polls during Civil War

Many Virginia Mennonites went to the polls on May 23, 1861, fully intending to oppose secession from the Union. But under threat of loss of property and life, they voted for rather than against it. Because the voting was done orally, the threat to loss of property, physical harm or even hanging was very real. To recover reimbursement for loss of material goods to the Union Army during the war, one had to prove loyalty to the Union. But the claims of those who voted for secession were usually denied.
—*Unionists and the Civil War Experience in the Shenandoah Valley, Vol IV*, released Dec. 2

Celebrating before or after the 25th



Christmas joy without new toys: Tim, Patty and Nicholas Peebles

Provided

> **Instead of a quiet, reflective season, we were spending time in traffic and crowded malls.**
> —Tim Peebles

Throwing out the tree

by Anna Groff

Ten years ago, Patty and Tim Peebles of Living Water Community Church in Chicago threw out their Christmas tree and haven't used one since.

When their son Nicholas, who is now 13, was 2 years old, they were concerned about how he would experience consumerism in the holiday season. As a family, they decided not to exchange gifts with their family or decorate a tree but wanted to replace those traditions with more than "just not doing anything," Patty says.

So for his second Christmas, Patty and Tim constructed a large, rustic stable—about 7 feet high—out of driftwood from nearby Lake Michigan.

Patty and Tim told Nicholas they were waiting for something special and added new elements to the stable during Advent, and they did Advent readings and prayers as a family.

Families discover new ways of gift-giving to more fully experience Christ's coming.

After the Christmas Eve service at their church, they put Nicholas to bed and added a baby doll to the manger to represent Jesus. When Nicholas discovered the baby in the morning, he was "absolutely blown away," says Patty. He picked up the baby and kissed it and gathered his dinosaur toys to greet the baby Jesus.

They wanted Nicholas to experience this kind of Christmas joy without new toys. They had become increasingly discontented with consumer culture, especially around Christmas, Tim says.

"Instead of a quiet, reflective season, we were spending time in traffic and crowded malls," he says.

They grew tired of trading things with people who already have everything they need, Tim says. For example, one year he gave a CD to someone who also gave him a CD.

"We appreciated the desires of our families to be generous and we wanted that as well, but the sense of generosity was overwhelmed by the money and energy it took to purchase these things," Tim says.

By the time Christmas rolled around they would be too tired and weren't as emotionally and spiritually ready as they wanted to be, Patty says.

Celebrating Epiphany: They also learned more about the Christian calendar and realized importance of the days after Dec. 25 and of Three Kings Day, or Epiphany (Jan. 6), the high point of the holidays, Patty says. Epiphany is the Christian feast commemorating the revelation of Jesus to the world through the visit of the Magi.

For the past decade, the Peebles have used Advent as a time to reflect and Christmas Day as a time to support those around them who don't have family, and they wait until Epiphany to feast with friends. On Epiphany day they host a fancy vegetarian dinner and invite their friends to bring artistic gifts, poems and prayers to share.

Tim admits that their Epiphany celebration is on a smaller scale than consumer Christmas and may not have the same impact.

He says he felt tempted to replicate those same feelings and sentiments but over time realized "the lower-scale approach to the holidays … has a more indirect benefit [and it] teaches that these occasions aren't just about me." In fact, it's OK to feel sad during this time of the year, he says.

Reaching out to others: Since they stay home in Chicago on Christmas Day, they've been able to open their lives and homes to people in their church and community that don't have family to celebrate with.

People at church sometimes dread holidays because they are single or separated from their family, but at the Peebles' house on Dec. 25 "forced happiness" is not expected, Tim says. He now has a strong understanding of Jesus' instructions to leave our families to follow him and to cry with those who cry.

Patty says their practice has felt empty and lonely and difficult at times, but it's helped her realize there are many other lonely people in the world and remind her of political implications of Jesus' coming—things she didn't hear while growing up in her Methodist church.

"Turning over the power structure are things we are supposed to be enacting now," she says.

Turning over the power structure are things we are supposed to be enacting now.—Patty Peebles

At first, Patty says, she wondered if no gift giving would feel weird to Nicholas, but since it's all he's known, it's now his Christmas culture.

She hopes they are equipping him to have more resources and to question practices around him. She remembers looking through the Sears catalog as a child, but this isn't his understanding of Christmas, she says.

Church and family responds: When they proposed the no-gift policy to their families, they liked the idea of spending less money but weren't interested in eliminating the trees and gifts entirely.

Patty and Tim's families support their choice but still celebrate in the traditional way with gifts, so the Peebles no longer attend their extended family Christmases.

They still make an effort to visit their family in December and January and encourage relatives to redirect gift-giving energies to Nicholas for his birthday or make a donation to their church or another organization in their name.

Tim says no one at Living Water has followed suit. People admire the Nativity scene and their low-cost tradition but seem attached to trees and presents, he says.

He encourages people to experiment with scaling back the consumer aspect of Christmas each year, although he acknowledges that breaking customs and relationships with family is difficult.

"Take as big a step as you can, then step back and ask if it's better or not," he says. "I am a large advocate of experimenting."

Anna Groff is assistant editor of The Mennonite.

This article is available as a podcast at www.The Mennonite.org

ONLINE

The Millers: Three Kings Day and Epiphany

When Joan and Lloyd Miller lived in Southern Texas in the late 1960s, they heard of the Three Kings Day and Epiphany tradition.

Following their first Christmas after moving to Elkhart, Ind., some friends from Puerto Rico celebrated Three Kings Day, or Epiphany, with a hog roast in their closed garage.

Now the Millers celebrate Three Kings Day on Jan. 6 every year. They realized they were cramming so many Christmases with grandparents and their family into so few days, they decided to delay their immediate Miller family Christmas to Epiphany.

"It really is celebrating the full 12 days of Christmas, which begin on Dec. 25," Joan says. "It's a more unhurried way to celebrate."

The Millers celebrate with the popular traditions from Puerto Rico and Mexico. On the eve of Epiphany they participate in the tradition of leaving their shoes on the porch for the "camels" to eat, then leave gifts in the shoes. On Epiphany, they drink Mexican hot chocolate and eat a special cake with a bean cooked in it. Whoever discovers the bean is "royalty" for the day and chooses the way and order the gifts are exchanged.

Photos provided

Joan Yoder Miller and granddaughter Norah George-Miller during a time of reading and devotions before cutting into the Three Kings Day cake at right. Stars and kings are common motifs during this season.

The tradition started when their oldest son was 2 years old, so their children have not known anything else.

When their sons, Ryan and Dustin, grew older, they spoke of the tensions of returning to school before having opened their gifts. Their friends talked about what they got for Christmas, but Ryan and Dustin had to wait. However, Joan says, for the most part they enjoyed having something to look forward to in January.

Joan also took a Three Kings Day cake to school to "bring our strange custom into the realm of our children's classroom."

They also invite a new family with young children each year to celebrate Three Kings Day with them. Many of these families have started incorporating the tradition into their own family's holiday schedule, Joan says.

Many members of the Miller family now collect Magi and appreciate the symbolism of stars and light, says Joan.

"The whole thing has been sort of illuminating for us as it has evolved through the years," she says. —*Anna Groff*

Photo provided

The Bradleys: shopping at the thrift shop

Beth Burns of Newton, Kan., and her three daughters (pictured at left with her husband, Everett Bradley), "regift" or thrift shop for Christmas presents to do their part to resist consumerism.

Three years ago, they decided to forgo the mall and chose to do their Christmas shopping at the local Mennonite Central Committee Etcetera Shop.

They made a list of who they wanted to shop for and were surprised at how many items they found that "fit the people on their list."

"It was so much fun, we keep doing it," says Beth. "It's exciting when you go to Etcetera and you find the perfect thing for the person on your list. [The gifts] are more meaningful because there is more thought put into it."

Beth says this kind of gift giving feels more personal than shopping at the mall, where "you don't think through who would like what as much."

If they can't find them at Etcetera, they try to make the gifts, such as baskets and jewelry.

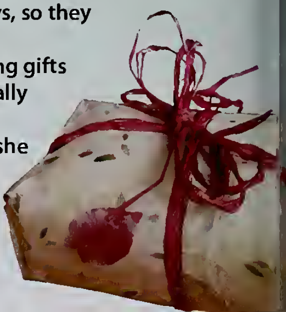
The first year, they told their extended family that they shopped at Etcetera and encouraged them to join but weren't terribly successful, says Beth.

Her daughters, ages 8, 13 and 15, are the only grandchildren in their extended family, so their aunts, uncles and grandparents like to give them gifts.

"I don't want to take away someone else's joy in giving," Beth says, so they graciously accept those gifts.

Christmas is a time to gather with family, and giving and receiving gifts goes along with that, she says. "Our society of consumerism has really become the norm."

However, the shopping at Etcetera is "doing their part to regift," she says. She and Everett want to help their children "grow up to be well-balanced and not just consumers all the time."—*Anna Groff*



The Neffs: St. Nicholas Day

Photo provided

Dana, Sheralynn, Kathleen and Darnell Neff

Dana and Kathleen Neff, who live in North Newton, Kan., served in Haiti with Mennonite Central Committee and observed that many people celebrated Christmas without giving gifts.

"We wanted to do that, but when we thought about having children, we wondered how we can do this without our children feeling totally out of it," Dana says.

They decided to enjoy gift-giving as a family on St. Nicholas Day, held on Dec. 6, which commemorates the saint who is now the image of Santa Claus.

"Children can be connected with their peers but separate gifts from Christmas," Dana says.

With the gift-giving out of the way early in the month, the Neffs and their children, Darnell, 20, and Sheralynn, 17, then focus on the spiritual nature of Christmas around Christmas Day with family and church events instead of last-minute shopping stress.

"I can't quite imagine now how people get it all in with the gift-giving," says Dana. "[Our] Christmas Day is pretty relaxed.

As a child it's hard to differentiate gifts from Christmas, Sheralynn says. "I like how with this separation ... it still provides for the blessing of giving gifts to each other, but in a sense it keeps Christmas pure." She says she will carry on this tradition if she has a family.

While they don't give gifts at the traditional time, they do display a Christmas tree. Instead of wrapped presents underneath, they place piles of books. Many of the books tell the Christmas story—some are fictional accounts told from different characters' perspectives, while others address the spiritual time of the season. Each year they add one or two new books.

"Reading has always been important to us," says Kathleen. When her children were younger they chose books from under the tree to read for bedtime.

They also experience Advent through a wreath with 25 little bundles tied to it. Each bundle has a Scripture verse with candy or a toy for an object lesson. As their children grew, the Advent celebrations evolved.

"Now we have deeper meditations for Advent with good singing," says Kathleen.—*Anna Groff*

Mennonites and Christmas

"Mennonites celebrate Christmas. We recognize this as the time when Jesus was born, and this is the basis for our celebration. Different groups of Mennonites may celebrate differently. The more modern groups use the same decorations and gifts as others. There often is an emphasis on giving gifts to the needy as well. The more traditional/conservative groups do not have Christmas trees or use decorations around the house. They may attend a church service on Christmas Day. Gifts for the family are usually simple. For all groups it is an important family day when large family gatherings are held. African American, Hispanic and Asian Mennonites may celebrate different Christmas traditions from their cultural backgrounds."
—Third Way Café

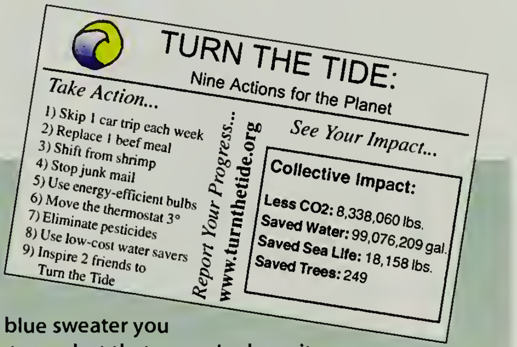
Green gift ideas

Gifts for the environment

- Buy renewable energy credits: Credits help offset the environmental costs of our energy needs by funding renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar power, elsewhere on the grid.
- Assemble a "Turn the Tide" gift basket with compact fluorescent light bulbs, forms for getting rid of junk mail, delicious recipes and a note about how the recipients can log on to www.turnthetide.org and see exactly how much of a positive impact they're having on the environment.
- Buy a potted Christmas tree and replant it after the holidays. You can also have a tree planted elsewhere in someone's honor through www.americanforests.org.
- Instead of new wrapping paper, reuse old paper—the Sunday comics section, old maps, decorated brown grocery bags or a colorful piece of material.
- Give a friend a membership to a nonprofit organization. JustGive.org allows you to donate online to thousands of charities.

Regifting without guilt

- Regift: Although many times the idea is misconstrued to be taken as a way to get rid of junk, when done right it can serve as a great way to save money and the Earth's resources. When you regift, it makes it possible for that lonely blue sweater you always try on but that never looks quite right to become your friend's new favorite.
- Box of dress-up clothes for a child: Old dresses, high heel shoes, cowboy boots, collared shorts and many other fun outfit ideas can all be found at thrift or second-hand stores, which have great selections.
- Share a love of reading: Give away the last great book you bought and enjoyed to someone who shares your taste.
- Shop thrift stores in your area or online: This serves as a large-scale version of regifting in which the options are endless.



TURN THE TIDE:
Nine Actions for the Planet

Take Action...

1) Skip 1 car trip each week
2) Replace 1 beef meal
3) Shift from shrimp
4) Stop junk mail
5) Use energy-efficient bulbs
6) Move the thermostat 3°
7) Eliminate pesticides
8) Use low-cost water savers
9) Inspire 2 friends to Turn the Tide

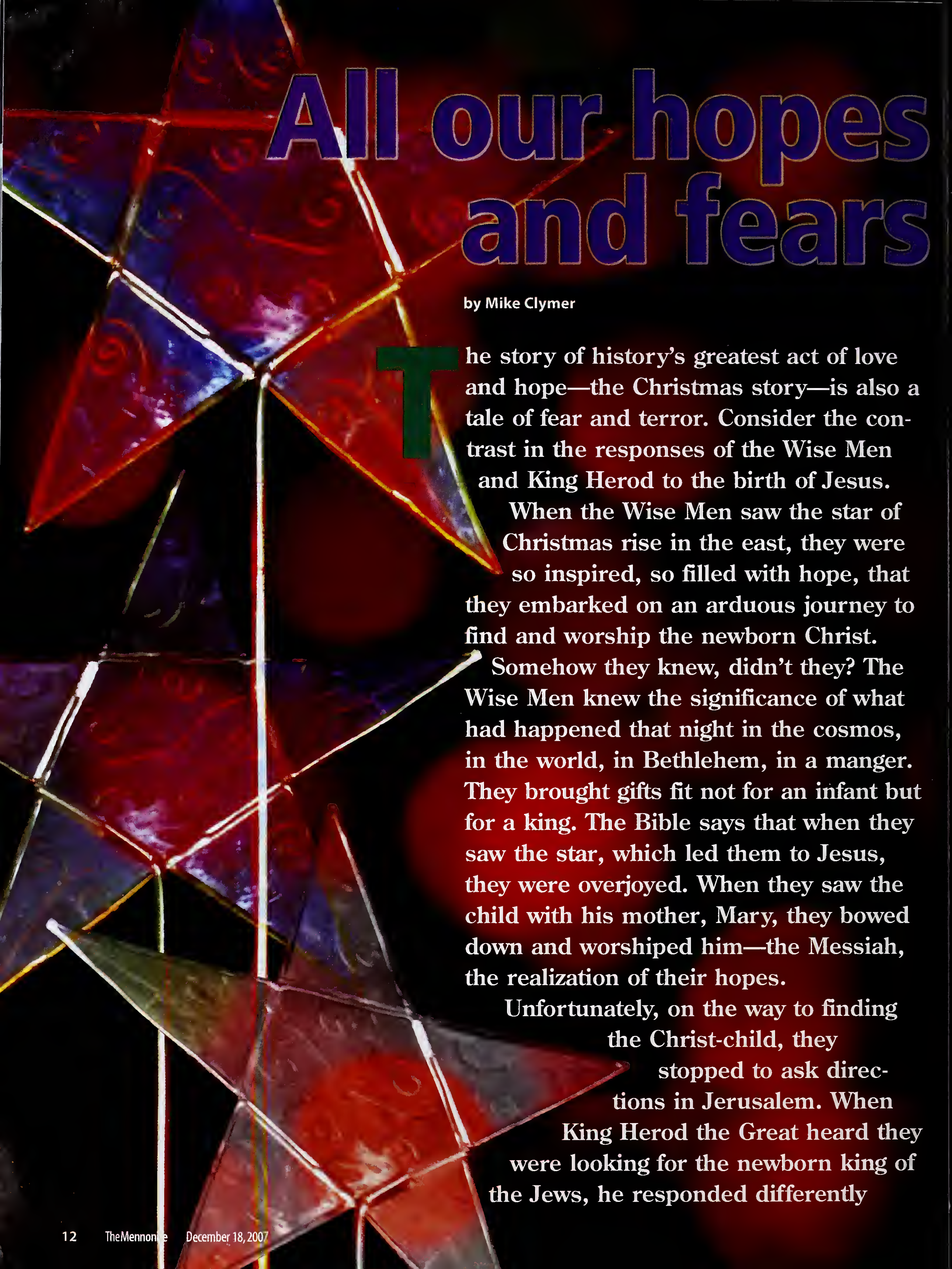
Report Your Progress...
www.turnthetide.org

See Your Impact...

Collective Impact:
Less CO2: 8,338,060 lbs.
Saved Water: 99,076,209 gal.
Saved Sea Life: 18,158 lbs.
Saved Trees: 249

Gifts of time

- Special activities with a significant other: a candlelit dinner, massage or facial, museum date or outdoor activity;
- A monthly lunch date with an elderly relative or friend;
- Gift certificates: dinner and a movie, a home-cooked meal, a car wash, a day of babysitting;
- Tickets to a favorite cultural or sporting event;
- Reconnect with someone: Call an estranged friend or write a letter to someone you haven't seen in a few years.—*from www.newdream.org*



All our hopes and fears

by Mike Clymer

The story of history's greatest act of love and hope—the Christmas story—is also a tale of fear and terror. Consider the contrast in the responses of the Wise Men and King Herod to the birth of Jesus.

When the Wise Men saw the star of Christmas rise in the east, they were so inspired, so filled with hope, that they embarked on an arduous journey to find and worship the newborn Christ.

Somehow they knew, didn't they? The Wise Men knew the significance of what had happened that night in the cosmos, in the world, in Bethlehem, in a manger. They brought gifts fit not for an infant but for a king. The Bible says that when they saw the star, which led them to Jesus, they were overjoyed. When they saw the child with his mother, Mary, they bowed down and worshiped him—the Messiah, the realization of their hopes.

Unfortunately, on the way to finding the Christ-child, they stopped to ask directions in Jerusalem. When King Herod the Great heard they were looking for the newborn king of the Jews, he responded differently

In an age of terror, we respond to God's greatest act of love by living hopefully rather than fearfully.

from the Magi. He was so disturbed, so filled with fear, that he embarked on a plan to kill the Christ-child. When the Wise Men never came back to tell him where Jesus was, Herod gave orders to murder all the boys in the Bethlehem region who might have been born around the same time as the Messiah. Whereas the Wise Men responded to the Christ's birth with hope and joy, Herod responded with fear and violence.

Our two most basic motivations are love and fear. The love I refer to is "agape"—the love concerned for the well-being of all. This is the love expressed in 1 Corinthians 13 ("Love is patient, love is kind, it does not boast, it is not proud" NIV) and John 3:16 ("For God so loved the world"). It is the love that offers grace as the solution in difficult situations, the love that gives us hope, God's love as manifested in the birth of Jesus. When we are motivated by love we are at our best; those are the moments when we sense God's Spirit moving us. We know intuitively that actions motivated by love bring glory to God. These are the most generous, most worshipful things we do—not unlike the Wise Men's journey to find the Christ.

While I pray to be guided by that love, by God's love, all the time, I recognize that the other great motivation in life is fear. I'm shocked when I consider how much of what I do is driven by fear of one sort or another: fear of illness, fear of pain, fear of humiliation, fear of poverty, fear of exclusion. And those are just a few of the obvious ones for me. Many of our fears are difficult to identify; those unnamed fears may be the most powerful ones of all. Fear sometimes motivates us to do constructive things, such as buckle our seat belts, study for tests or pay our bills on time, but just as often fear pushes us in darker, more destructive directions. Much of the violence in our lives and in our world is rooted in fear. Whereas agape love is expansive and generous and gracious, fear is by its nature selfish, concerned with me and those closest to me. As powerful a force as fear can be, its effect on us is to make us smaller, meaner. When we are motivated by fear, we are often at our worst, not unlike Herod as he furiously gave the order to slaughter so many innocents.

Whereas the Wise Men responded to the Christ's birth with hope and joy, Herod responded with fear and violence.

Just as I wish I would respond more often out of God's love rather than selfish fear, so I pray that our world would choose the way of the Wise Men rather than the way of Herod. But these are fearful times, and we live in a fearful society. We are much consumed these days by terror and terrorism. The Sept. 11 attacks six years ago were designed not only to kill thousands of innocent people but to spread fear among the rest of us. Too often our political leaders are ready and willing to exploit that fear in order to garner support for policies or win elections. This perpetuates a dismaying cycle of suspicion, accusation and fear-mongering that appeals to our basest instincts rather than our highest ideals. We even have a color-coded "terror alert" system that tells us just how afraid we should be. In the midst of such pervasive, manipulative fear, it is tempting to assume we have no choice but to live fearfully.

Yet we Christians know better, don't we? We know about agape love. We know that God's grace can break those cycles of fear and violence. We know that our security and our hope are based not on military might or economic power but on the birth of that Christ-child in a dusty manger in Bethlehem. And we know there is always a choice—a fundamental choice—to give in to our fears or hold on to our hope that God's way is love.

How then do we enter the heart of the Christmas season, some 2,000 years after the event that inspired such different responses from the Wise Men and King Herod? Ostensibly this is the season of hope and good cheer, a time of celebrating love

Continued on page 14

We know that God's grace can break those cycles of fear and violence.

Continued from page 13

and generosity, a chance to spend meaningful time with friends and family in recognition of God's great gift to us. Yet we carry our fears with us into this season as well, don't we? The holiday season often brings a rise in rates of anxiety and depression. It can be among the busiest, most pressure-filled, stressful times of the year. The commercialization of Christmas on TV and in shopping malls all too easily drowns out the authentic message of Jesus' humble birth. I sometimes find the cumulative effect of all this festivity inspires more selfishness than generosity, more weariness than joy.

But as the Wise Men knew, what happened that momentous night in Bethlehem was something still worth celebrating 2,000 years later. God changed the world with love and generosity, and in the process God freed us from all our fears. "Do not be afraid," the angel said to the shepherds. "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people." And the heavenly host joined in, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." This was God's cosmic response to his lost creation. This was God's personal response to each little lost sheep. To a world of violence, God offered peace. To a world of selfishness, God offered generosity. To a world of brokenness, God offered healing. To a world of fear, God offered hope.

God's gift of Jesus—the gift of love, the freedom from fear—though freely offered, nonetheless provides us with the choice of how to respond. Do we recognize Jesus as the Christ, God's generosity incarnate, and live our lives motivated by grace and hope? Are we Wise Men and Women, or do we succumb, like Herod, to our fears?

If we journey, like Wise Men and Women, to find the Christ-child this Christmas season, perhaps we don't carry with us offerings of gold, incense and myrrh but rather our fears—fears that bind us, weigh us down, narrow our vision and harden our hearts, fears based on past experiences, fears springing from current difficulties, fears imagined in the future, fears to offer to the King, to the one who can free us from all our fears. Zephaniah 3 (NIV) promises: "The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm. … Do not fear, O Zion. … The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." The birth of Jesus represents the realization of those promises, a new covenant between a loving God and his beloved creation, the source of all our hopes.

"O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.

Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;

the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight."

Mike Clymer is a member of Jubilee Mennonite Church, Meridian, Miss. This article is adapted from a Christmas sermon he gave last December.

Morguefile.com

In the unlocked cages of God's apocalyptic zoo

by David Wright

The wolves live with the lambs; together, they lie down
where the scent of wet wool reminds them
both of desire and flesh.

The deer and the bear share a love of grasses;
they graze and work at pastoral maintenance,
their haunches tensed, at times, though
not meaning to lunge.

The calf, the lion, the small, tender fatling,
together in the same open stall, wait
for a single bale of straw to share.

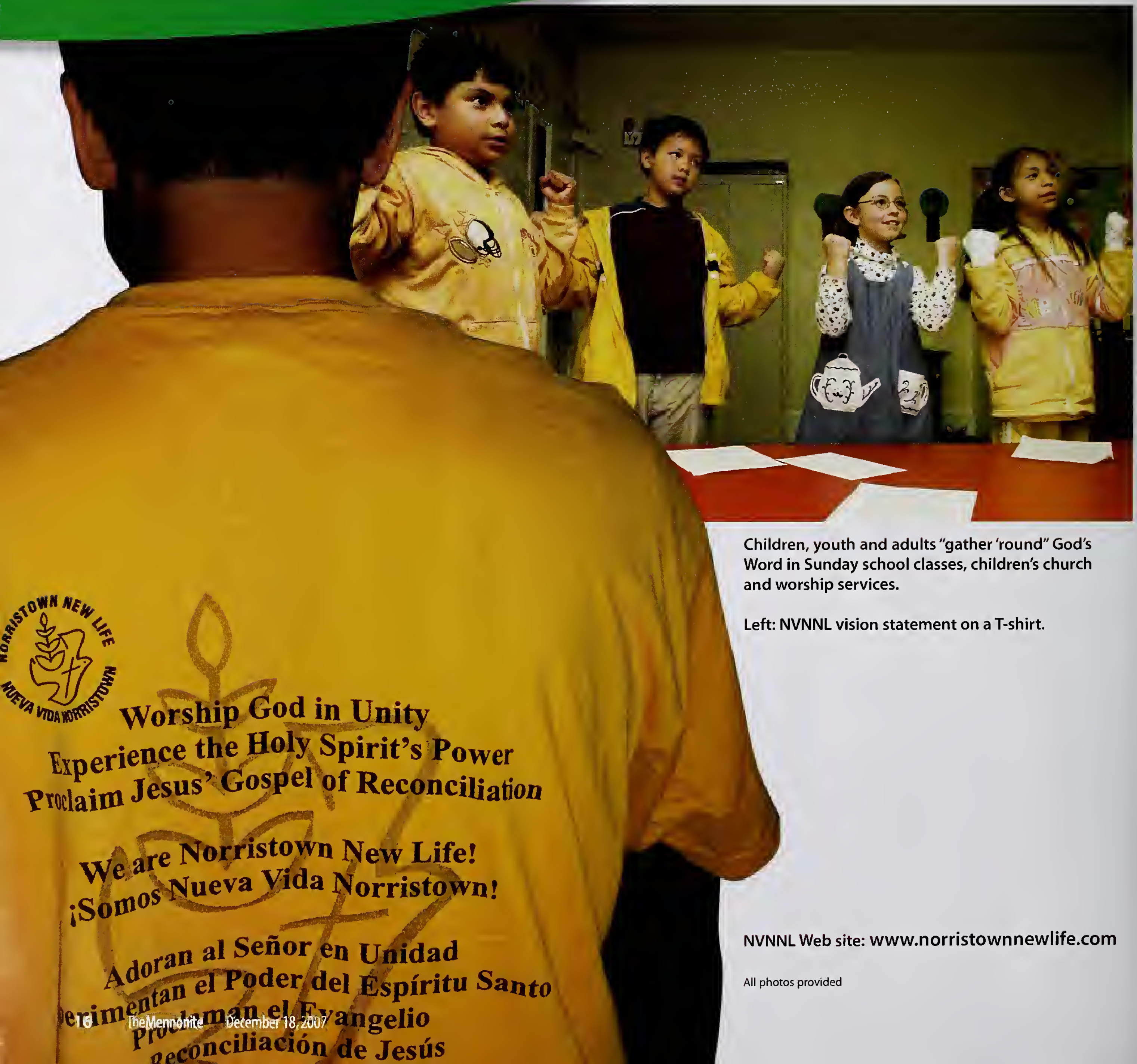
And at night, after hundreds of mouthfuls
of alfalfa,
hundreds more of sweet clover, the leopard
offers up her short, deep cough, and, then,
rhythmic groans like the pulse of a saw—

As every creature remembers itself, forever,
how it was to be certain of death,
of our own pulse and the blood we loved.

David Wright is a member of First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana, Ill.

Nueva Vida Iglesia Menonita
Norristown New Life Mennonite Church

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA


NORRISTOWN NEW LIFE
NUEVA VIDA NORRISTOWN
Worship God in Unity
Experience the Holy Spirit's Power
Proclaim Jesus' Gospel of Reconciliation
We are Norristown New Life!
¡Somos Nueva Vida Norristown!
Adoran al Señor en Unidad
perimentan el Poder del Espíritu Santo
Proclaman el Evangelio
Reconciliación de Jesús

Children, youth and adults "gather 'round" God's Word in Sunday school classes, children's church and worship services.

Left: NVNNL vision statement on a T-shirt.

NVNNL Web site: www.norristownnewlife.com

All photos provided

New pastoral team: Marta Castillo (second from left) has joined the pastoral team with Ertell Whigham (center) and Angel Tamayo (right), pictured with their spouses Julio, Patricia and Elizabeth. Luke Beidler retired from the pastoral team last summer.

Below: How many Mennonite pastors does it take to burn the mortgage? Pastor Angel holds the mortgage, Pastor Ertell strikes the match and Pastor Luke holds the bucket.

Below, right: An outdoor service

We give God the glory and honor for Nueva Vida Norristown New Life (NVNNL) and the work God is doing through us. Our daily experience of new life in Jesus is wrapped in the commitment to journey together as a diverse community and be blessed by it. We come from more than 15 countries or cultures, but "we are one in Christ." All leadership groups, including the pastoral team, represent our ethnic diversity.

NVNNL is in its 17th year of missional ministry, built on the legacies of three founding congregations. We invite our community to meet Jesus and experience the Revelation 7:9 foretaste of God's kingdom in outdoor services, a youth center, a child-care center, micro-enterprise training and through participation with a homeless shelter and thrift store. We are excited to move through new doors of ministry that Jesus holds open for us (Revelation 3:8).—*Stand Together Ministry Team*

Damos la honra y gloria a Dios por Nueva Vida Norristown New Life (NVNNL) y la obra que Dios esta haciendo por medio de nosotros. Nuestra experiencia diaria de nueva vida en Jesús esta envuelta en el compromiso de caminar juntos como una comunidad diversa y ser bendecidos por esto. Venimos de mas que 15 países o culturas, pero "somos uno en Cristo." Todos los grupos de liderazgo, incluyendo el equipo pastoral, representan nuestra diversidad étnica.

NVNNL esta en sus 17 años de ministerio misional, construido en las historias de tres congregaciones fundamentales. Invitamos a la comunidad a un encuentro con Jesús y experimentamos el anticipo del reino de Dios en Apocalipsis 7:9 en los servicios al aire libre, un centro de jóvenes, una guardería de niños, entrenamiento de micro empresas y a través de participación con un refugio para las personas sin hogar y un tienda de ropa y cosas usadas. Estamos muy contentos de entrar por puertas nuevas de ministerio que Jesús abre para nosotros (Apocalipsis 3:8).—*Ministerio de Mantenimiento la Unidad*

Seeing the new

And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new."—Revelation 21:5

James Schrag is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

Newness, freshness and anticipation are all choices of faith. These things are not found except through the eye of the beholder.

Some people have a gift for seeing the new in the old. I sometimes imagine I have this gift, and just when I had assured myself a dozen times I would find a new way to approach a person, circumstance or issue, I revert to old ways.

Where does inspiration come from to be new, to be transformed in how we see things? Vision, which we speak of reverently as something leaders possess in special measure, is something we all possess. Vision is how we see things. Faith in God, through Jesus, is meant to engender a positive vision of the world around us.

Seeing the new becomes a decision—a conscious preference for seeing something fresh in the old. This fresh view can be experienced by anyone, anywhere, anytime, as long as you choose to see life in this way.

This kind of vision is not a fact of life; it is a choice in life. A problem is not a problem until we decide to name it that. An opportunity is not seen until we decide it is something worth our attention. How do you use your vision? Do you see nothing but problems, or are you surrounded by opportunities?

We miss seeing the new in things because we are focused on what has been instead of nurturing an eye for what might be.

We miss seeing the new in things because we are focused on what has been instead of nurturing an eye for what might be. We are befuddled with things in our lives that won't go away because we have made a choice to cling to them, not because we are incapable of letting go.

People who are able to see the new choose to believe that things beyond our control are the smaller part of our existence. They cling to the audacious faith that most circumstances, people and events can be seen in new ways. Such a vision starts a transformation of reality that generates new options. This altered grasp of reality has a power far beyond our own imagining.

The Apostle Paul was a visionary who used imagery of the eternal to describe current possibilities: "Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20).

This is no Pollyanna, pie-in-the-sky escapism. This view requires a clear sense of good and evil. We are not called to live in an unhealthy suspension between choices, where life is neither good nor bad. If you fail to see both sides of the coin, you will see little at all.

Christians are changed people, motivated to be new in Jesus Christ because death is seen as an old thing, replaced by the resurrection and the life. We speak of much more than a classical conversion when we speak of newness in Christ. We dare to see something new in ourselves every day. Moreover, the work of God's Spirit in the life and presence of Jesus gives life to us together, who are his body, the church. The church is made fresh, covering over last year's blemishes, making the body young and winsome in both appearance and outlook. Mennonite Church USA can be this kind of church, if we make fresh choices in our individual lives and in our corporate life together. This makes us trend setters, not just trend followers.

Ours is no bootstraps religion. We are utterly dependent for newness on the work of God's grace in our lives, which continually opens to us the opportunity to see the old, including us as the body of Christ, with fresh eyes.

I desire for us together in Mennonite Church USA to have a fresh look at who we are and who the Holy Spirit is helping us become as we close one year and embark on another. Will you join me in choosing to see the newness and opportunities we as Mennonite Church USA possess—or will you see nothing but the problems ahead of us? It's a choice that is yours alone to make.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Mennonite but not Anabaptist**—Chad S. Mason
- **Musings on baptism**—John A. Lapp

Conference celebrates its changing face

Franconia Conference leaders find hope in 'the other' at annual assembly.

Tim Moyer

Noel Santiago (far right), Franconia Conference executive minister, prays with conference members at annual assembly.

When lunch was served to the delegates of the oldest Mennonite conference in the Western Hemisphere, the buffet table held Vietnamese egg rolls, fried tofu, peanut sauce, candied yams and fried chicken. Interpreters translated business agenda and updates into three languages. At the Franconia Mennonite Meetinghouse close to Telford, Pa., where Franconia Conference began more than 300 years ago, attendees sang hymns in Spanish and offered prayers in Indonesian.

Representatives from churches and pastors gather each November with conference staff to worship, welcome new pastors and congregations, discern future movements for the conference and learn about the ministries they support together. But for some, the event is also a reminder of how rapidly the face of the Northeast corridor—and Franconia Mennonite Conference with it—is changing.

The churches of Franconia Conference range from Vermont to Washington, D.C., including congregations initiated by waves of Swiss German immigrants who settled along the Skippack and Perkiomen creeks in the late 1600s to two Indonesian-speaking churches in South Philadelphia filled with recent immigrants who arrived in the United States after riots in Jakarta in the late 1990s.

The gathering opened on the evening of Nov. 16? with worship. Gilberto Flores, a denominational minister with Mennonite Church USA, presented the evening message. Speaking on the theme for the event, "Centered in Christ, Embracing God's Mission," Flores encouraged the audience to consider the mission to which God has called the church, a mission that includes all people from all places.

"Mission has to be embraced, not discussed," said Flores.

The evening service included a time to officially welcome two new congregations, Nations Worship Center of Philadelphia and Peace Mennonite Church of East Greenville, Pa., while newly credentialed pastors were introduced on Saturday morning. Items on Saturday's agenda also included discussion and affirmation of Vision and Financial Plan Team recommendations. Blaine Detwiler, pastor of Lakeview Mennonite Church in Susquehanna, Pa., was affirmed by vote as the new conference moderator; he will replace Merrill Moyer of Souderton, Pa., in January.

While those who gathered for the assembly recognized that with increasing diversity comes increasing challenges, they also found it to be a hopeful thing.

"There are a number of challenges, living in a traditional kind of church community that has long, deep values," said Noah Kolb, conference pastor of ministerial leadership. "And trying to value them while we open ourselves up to new ways of experiencing God's grace and God's mission among us—there's tension in that." Kolb said that church leaders now come from many different places—not just from other Mennonite churches or institutions but often from different cultures and countries.

I think a lot of the hope that I find comes just from relating to these people and seeing God at work within them and the desire to work together because there's some common mission that we're all wanting to move toward."

Marta Castillo, an associate pastor at Nueva Vida Norristown (Pa.) New Life Mennonite Church, said, "I see hope, as a new leader, in Franconia Conference. ... There's so much hope in the fact that God is bringing more and more people in the conference that are not like us. In the Bible it talks a lot about 'the others,' the unexpected people that God used in miraculous and wonderful ways. ... Sometimes it is 'the others' that God needs in this place and in this time."

"It's all about trust in God," said Yvonne Platts, who serves on the conference board. "It's all about listening, discerning and really trying to hear what messages God is saying for our church—and understanding that it's not about us. Anything new can be uncomfortable. Unfamiliar territory can make us afraid. But if we just trust and lean on Jesus, he will guide us," she said.—*Lora Steiner for Franconia Conference*

Sometimes it is 'the others' that God needs in this place and in this time. —Marta Castillo

Emerge Ministries prevents homelessness

Elkhart, Ind., congregation's program has served 225 families since September.

From left to right: Cora Brown, pastor of Church without Walls, Elkhart, Ind., and Tara McCoy.

When Tara McCoy found herself on the brink of becoming homeless, she was brought back on track by the Emerge Ministries program of Church Without Walls. Today, McCoy is back on her feet again and volunteers for Emerge Ministries, helping others in her community reemerge.

Church Without Walls, Elkhart, Ind., a Mennonite Church USA congregation, conducts a successful holistic model of mission through the Emerge Ministries program. Emerge is an outreach program born in the heart of pastor Cora Brown, and embraced by the congregation.

Emerge came and got me back on track, helped me refresh my memory in how to clean up the apartment and keeping up with debt.
—Tara McCoy

Brown says the program is designed to stabilize individuals and families who are prone to becoming homeless, bringing together faith-based organizations, local volunteers, state and local government and community agencies. Emerge also serves as an outreach ministry, allowing church members to model their faith as they offer concrete services.

The program has helped hundreds of families and individuals in the community who once teetered on the edge of homelessness, including McCoy, a single mother of two children. Elkhart Housing Authority referred McCoy to Emerge when she became at risk of losing her apartment. McCoy says she started to "slack and couldn't pay rent" because of a medical condition. She also could not keep up the cleaning standards of the Housing Authority.

"[Emerge] came and got me back on track, helped me refresh my memory in how to clean up the apartment and keeping up with debt," she says.

After McCoy had spinal surgery, Emerge staff helped her wash eight bags of laundry and clean the apartment to keep it up to standards.

According to Crystal Welsh, community development manager for the city of Elkhart, "although assistance in passing inspections is not part of the homeless prevention program, it definitely prevents homelessness."

Now McCoy is a volunteer for Emerge.

"I also help other clients clean their apartments and [am] training them in how to maintain them, too," says McCoy.

Brown first thought of the program, founded in 2002, while working with abused kids at a community services agency.

Brown realized that one of the major problems in the community was that parents did not have life skills for parenting or for keeping a home financially afloat.

Brown considers partnerships crucial. Emerge is in partnership with local authorities, schools, agencies and congregations from various denominations while being part of the Elkhart Homeless Coalition.

"You cannot do it alone," Brown says. To run a successful program, "you need to share information with other agencies and create a network, and we could not do it by ourselves. We get authorities from the city involved and have the support of the mayor as well."

Churches are some of Emerge's most important partners. Emerge is planning a Christmas event with Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Emerge has helped 225 families since September. These services include helping pay utility bills, rental deposits and rent. However, even this level of service does not cover all the need in the community.

Although Emerge is a social service to the community, it is also part of the outreach and mission of Church Without Walls.

Emerge serves an allowed area around Church Without Walls, yet although the majority of the residents in that community are of African-American and Hispanic/Latino descent, the program is not limited to racial/ethnic groups or people who eventually will come to church.

According to Brown, Emerge serves more whites than people of color and helps people from all religious backgrounds.

The program has served as well as a missional ministry for Church Without Walls. According to Brown, "over 20 people have come to the Lord with this ministry" some of them with families. For more information, see www.makeadifferencemichiana.org.—*Saulo Padilla of Mennonite Mission Network*

Workers dismantle walls in South Africa

North American team joins locals to renovate one of oldest structures in town.

South African sunlight streamed through gaping holes in the plastered bricks of Grace Community Church, Philipstown, haloing a black man with a wheelbarrow and a white woman with a shovel cleaning up debris from dismantled walls. The two came from communities separated by oceans—physical and political—to build the household of God—literally and spiritually.

From Oct. 7 to 19, a team of 16 North Americans joined workers from Philipstown to renovate the Grace Community Church building, one of the oldest structures in this town of 3,000, whose economy has plummeted after post-apartheid white flight to urban centers.

Aubrey Badula, foreman of the church's building project, says, "Having our kin from North America with us was a huge value to our town that is still struggling to get out of apartheid. Our congregation and the townspeople can't stop talking about it."

However, the real work of dismantling dividing walls and building up God's household is taking place as those who worked and worshiped together resume their daily lives. Mennonites from Indiana and Oregon returned to their home congregations with new understandings about secularism, materialism and relationships. Philipstown South Africans are experiencing new ways of integrating across racial divides.

Phil Lindell Detweiler, who has served with Mennonite Mission Network in South Africa since 2006, helped coordinate the cross-cultural encounter in Philipstown.

"The members of the building team probably can't begin to imagine how revolutionary it was for people of color to have white people live with them and treat them as equals," Lindell Detweiler says. "Just like the piano that plays constantly at Grace Community Church, laying a background for all that happens in worship, so race is that backdrop to all that we experienced in Philipstown."

Leon Pula, Grace's pastor, says the building team's presence served as a catalyst for community transformation in Philipstown. Because the church building is located in a formerly white neighborhood, most of the people living around the church are whites, even though people of color make up the majority of the area population. When whites living around Grace saw whites and blacks living and laboring side-by-side, they took notice.

"The whites are happy because this is the first time anyone here has renovated an old building," Pula says. "Grace is bringing pride to Philipstown. We are a small, rural community so we cannot be divided. We must all work together for the good of the community."

Grace's vision for Philipstown extends to all aspects of community-building, with "Monday-to-Monday" activities that include worship, prayer and education.

"The day is coming when whites will enter into worship with us," Pula says. "Conversations about our building have been leading to spiritual conversations. We are putting traditional structures [of apartheid] aside."

In every recounting of the Philipstown experience, North Americans and South Africans agree that the most important outcome of the two weeks of interaction was the building of relationships. "In the first days, we had mixed feelings," Badula says. "We didn't trust whites, but we could see the openness of our American brothers and sisters. They came and slept in our houses. They accepted, even enjoyed, our food. They worshiped God with us. This is what built strong relationships between us. This was the great highlight of our time together."

Unexpected delays in flights, luggage and work materials stretched some of the North Americans. Yet Amee Click of Clinton Frame Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., eventually found positive growth in these long and frustrating waits.

"I think God delayed things so we would learn to rely on prayer like the members of [Grace] do," she says.

North American participants now struggle with how to restructure their daily lives to integrate what they learned in Philipstown.

The day is coming when whites will enter into worship with us. Conversations about our building have been leading to spiritual conversations.—Leon Pula

Linda Pieri, the mission chairperson for First Mennonite, wants to help her congregation become more actively involved with Grace Community Church and mission in general. Already Sunday school children are using Mennonite Mission Network globe banks to contribute to the growth of Quito Mennonite Church in Ecuador, and Pieri's family is giving gifts to a local homeless shelter this Christmas. Out of her new understanding about prayer, Click is working to build a prayer partnership between members of Clinton Frame and Grace.—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network*

Mennonites take a seat at global table

Global Christian Forum sees 245 church representatives from 72 countries.

The Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches were represented at a historic first gathering of world leaders from all branches of the Christian faith Nov. 6-9 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Called the Global Christian Forum, it drew 245 invited church representatives from 72 nations to explore the theme "Our Journey with Jesus Christ, the Reconciler." They ranged from Orthodox, Catholic and Anglican to African Instituted, Pentecostal and Evangelical. By design, about half were from the latter two groups, who usually don't attend ecumenical events.

As we began to hear and see common threads in our stories, we were inevitably drawn closer to each other. —Danisa Ndlovu

Mennonite World Conference representatives were Danisa Ndlovu of Zimbabwe, MWC vice president and president-elect, Patricia Urueña of Colombia, serving as a Mennonite missionary in Ecuador, and Larry Miller of France, general secretary. Bill Winger of Canada, member of the Brethren in Christ Church and Chief Financial Officer of the World Evangelical Alliance, participated as part of the WEA delegation.

"This was the first time since the early centuries of Christian history the whole spectrum of leadership in the Christian world sat at the same table," says Miller.

The World Council of Churches represents only a quarter of world Christians and does not include Catholics, who comprise half. Nor does it include most Evangelicals and Pentecostals, the fastest-growing groups.

The process was instigated in the late 1990s by Konrad Raiser, then WCC general secretary.

"He said we need a safe place where the whole church can gather, where they can trust each other, where they don't feel that the WCC or the Catholic Church is trying to take over, and where there are no institutional commitments," Miller says. "So it was decided to create a space where the third of the world population that is Christian can sit at the same table and talk to each other and build confidence with one another."

Out of this grew a series of regional meetings leading up to the global gathering.

The event was neither a theological exchange nor a debate but a forum where Christian groups could tell their stories about experiencing Jesus Christ as reconciler.

A Global Forum statement (www.globalchristianforum.org/nairobi/) afterward praised the "new beginning" that was made despite differing views on ecclesiology, mission and the scope of evangelism.

"We have been encouraged to move out of the familiar ground on which we normally stand, to meet each other on a common ground, where mutual trust might flourish and where we might be empowered to celebrate, enter into dialogue and act together," it read.

Ndlovu says the organized sharing of testimonies of conversion, ministry and discipleship was a clear highlight.

"As we began to hear and see common threads in our stories, we were inevitably drawn closer to each other," he says.

While the theme of unity "echoed as a refrain" throughout the meetings, he says it was not a call for a single or universal church "but a church that recognizes and respects its diversity in terms of its historic traditions and its mission to the world."

Ndlovu says he is grateful for "the openness that allowed church leaders to make themselves vulnerable, confessing mistakes and prejudices regarding others. It has been a good start for a process of coming together."

"Having a common history of faith is a seed of hope to bring down the barriers that divide us," adds Urueña. "Spirituality is a passion that we have in common with the various families of faith … it is a passion that we must keep to nurture together."

"What was most impressive was that this process to bring all Christian churches to the same table, especially Evangelicals and Pentecostals, seems to be working," says Miller. "If it continues for a couple of decades, this gathering will someday be viewed as a watershed in 21st century Christianity."—*Mennonite World Conference*

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MCC responds to Bangladesh cyclone

Mennonite Central Committee's goal is to build 1,250 houses by next April.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is beginning a project to build 1,250 houses in a rural Bangladeshi community where thousands of people lost their homes to the winds and floodwaters of Cyclone Sidr.

Sidr tore into Bangladesh's coast on Nov. 15 with wind speeds comparable to those of Hurricane Katrina. Seven MCC workers will relocate this week to the coastal district of Bagerhat to organize the construction project, according to Larry Fisher, MCC's Bangladesh representative. MCC expects to hire an additional 40 construction workers.

MCC will rebuild houses in Taffelbari, a coastal area of Bagerhat that is home to many fishing and farming families. Since the storm, many families in Taffelbari are living beside the roads in makeshift tents, constructed out of whatever materials they could find, such as blankets, sticks and tin sheeting.

MCC is helping provide food to 10,000 households in Bangladesh through a partner organization, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Fisher says that many other organizations are providing food to people affected by the cyclone, but MCC will be one of the first to rebuild homes.

Derek D'Silva

Families whose homes were destroyed by Cyclone Sidr are camped out on a roadside near Taffelbari, Bagerhat district, Bangladesh.

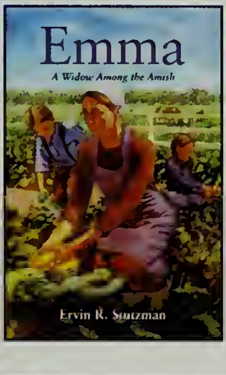
Fisher says that building houses is a way to help families become self-sufficient again after the trauma of the cyclone.

Fisher estimates that each house will cost about $320 to build, including labor, materials and administrative costs.

MCC is appealing for funds now to build 1,250 houses by April.—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee*

Note: Jeannette Hanson wrote "Language Offers Connections in China," which appeared on page 23 of the Nov. 6 issue.

Herald Press: Great Christmas Gifts



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Group calls for a 'nonkilling' society

Mennonites participate in Global Non-killing Leadership Forum in Hawaii.

On Nov. 1-4, 40 people representing 20 countries gathered at a Korean Buddhist Temple in Honolulu to ask one question, "Is a nonkilling society possible?"

These individuals—from Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Muslim, Jewish and various Christian faith traditions, including Mennonite—participated in the first Global Nonkilling Leadership Forum.

The gathering arose from reader responses to the book *Nonkilling Global Political Science*, which is being translated into 26 languages, with 13 already published. The full English text is available at www.globalnonviolence.org. The author, Glenn D. Paige, is professor emeritus of political science at the University of Hawaii.

The goal is not to win over your opponent but to win your opponent over to the way of nonviolence. —Bernard Lafayette

Roy and Margaret Eby, members of Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church, financially supported and attended the forum. They have a daughter who teaches at the University of Hawaii—their connection to Paige's work.

For a devotional, Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, Mennonite Central Committee's co-director of the MCC Office on Justice and Peacebuilding, explained MCC's work with victims, offenders and restorative discipline in schools to other conference participants. Her spouse, Jim Amstutz, co-pastor of Akron Mennonite Church, shared about the Nickel Mines shootings and the Amish families' forgiveness, which led to an interview by a local Hawaiian PBS talk show host.

The forum was organized by the nonprofit Center for Global Nonviolence and was cosponsored by the Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace, University of Hawaii and the Mu Ryang Sa Buddhist Temple of Hawaii.

At the conference, Paige said that political scientists tend to be pessimists. One of his colleagues introduced the most common response to this thesis of a nonkilling society, "What about the real politic of our world today?"

Many stories presented at the conference came from some of the most violent places in the world.

Mairead Corrigan Maguire from Belfast, Northern Ireland, shared her story. She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977 with Betty Williams. Together they cofounded Women for Peace, which later became the Community for Peace People. Williams and Mairead brought 35,000 people onto the streets of Belfast, petitioning for peace between the Republican and Loyalist factions. They believed the most effective way to end the violence was not more violence but re-education.

Another conference participant was Luis Botero from Medellín, Colombia, who served as the nonviolence adviser to Guillermo Gaviria, former governor of Antioquia. Botero gave leadership to the Nonviolence Program to promote cultural change from violence to nonviolence in Colombia. The governor was captured by Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and eventually killed by his captors.

Bernard Lafayette from Kingston, R.I., and Charles Alfin, a retired police captain who now works as a nonviolence trainer at the Martin Luther King Center in Atlanta, both worked with Botero. In their presentation, they told of the training they did in the Colombian prison with the highest murder rate. They trained not only the prison guards but key leaders within the prison population in the ways of nonviolence.

Lafayette said the goal is not to win over your opponent but to win your opponent over to the way of nonviolence. Since the training there has only been one death inside the prison, he added.

On the last day of the conference, the participants were invited to sign an Affirmation of a Global Nonkilling Spirit.—The Mennonite *staff with Jim Amstutz*

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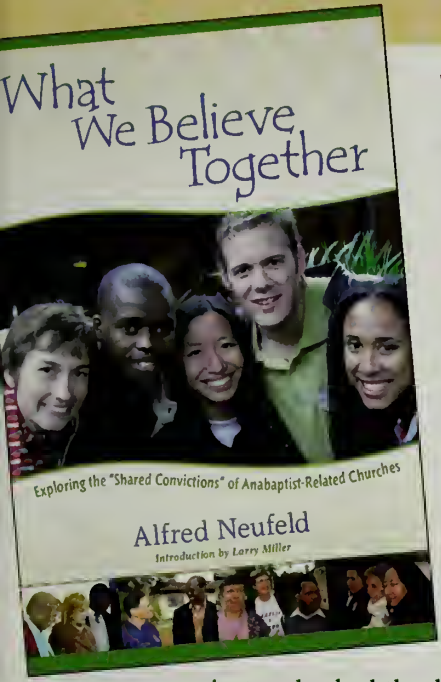
What We Believe Together
Exploring the "Shared Convictions" of Anabaptist-Related Churches
Alfred Neufeld
Introduction by Larry Miller

What We Believe Together

Exploring the "Shared Convictions" of Anabaptist-Related Churches

by Alfred Neufeld

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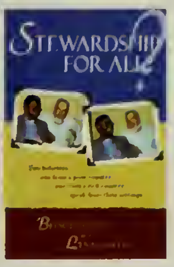
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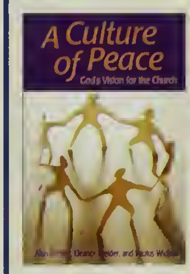
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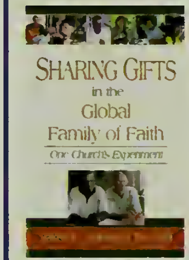
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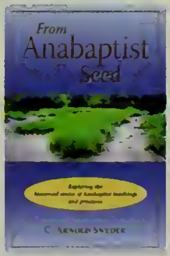
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FOR THE RECORD

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CALENDAR

Damascus Road Antiracism Analysis Training, Feb. 22-24, **Campolo School for Social Change**, Philadelphia, Pa. Online registration at www.damascusroad.franconiaconference.org or 215-723-5513.

WORKERS

Gasser, Kevin, was ordained for active ministry at Staunton Mennonite Church, Staunton, Va., on Nov. 4.

Schrag, Samuel Voth, was licensed as pastor at St. Louis Mennonite Fellowship, University City, Mo., on Sept. 9.

Villegas, Isaac, was ordained for active ministry at Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship, Chapel Hill, N.C., on Nov. 11.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Beck, Jace Alan, Nov. 15, to Jeremy and Meagan Kauffman Beck, Archbold, Ohio.

Beyer, Breelyn Elizabeth, Nov. 22, to Bryan and Carolyn Beyer, Akron, Pa.

Derstein, Benjamin Paul, Jr., Nov. 20, to Benjamin and Kate Rogalski Derstein, Telford, Pa.

Dove, Rowan Grier, Nov. 4, to Chad and Laurie Patterson Dove, Valley Center, Kan.

Gordon, Camryn Riley, Nov. 18, to Adrian and Cindy Groff Gordon, Schwenksville, Pa.

Harris, Ava Grace, Nov. 2, to Luke and Amber Nelson Harris, Silverton, Ore.

Kindt, Denver John, Nov. 17, to Evan and Mindy Waltner Kindt, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Lehman, Asher Emmanuel Kurtz, Sept. 25, to Kevin and Tanya Kurtz Lehman, Middlebury, Vt.

Martisko, Tyler Luke, Nov. 27, to Brent and Tonya Gaeddert Martisko, Inman, Kan.

Powell, Ariahna Sage, Nov. 21, to Sam and Lora Weaver Powell, Hartville, Ohio.

Rice, Lydia Grace, Nov. 9, Shawn and Melanie Miller Rice, Millersville, Pa.

Wisener, Jaxon Price, Oct. 21, to Tim and Michele Lam Wisener, Hartville, Ohio.

MARRIAGES

Blatz/Doell: Susan Blatz and Jeremy Doell, Altona, Manitoba, Aug. 11, at Altona Mennonite Church.

Christianson/Friesen: Stephan Christianson and Melanie Friesen, Altona, Manitoba, Aug. 18, at Altona Park.

Fleming/Ranck: Patrick Fleming, Allentown, Pa., and Elisa Ranck, Paradise, Pa., Nov. 17, at St. Malachi Church, Parkesburg, Pa.

Foster/Webb: Eric Foster, DeGraff, Ohio, and Jill Webb, West Liberty, Ohio, Nov. 10, at Bethel Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

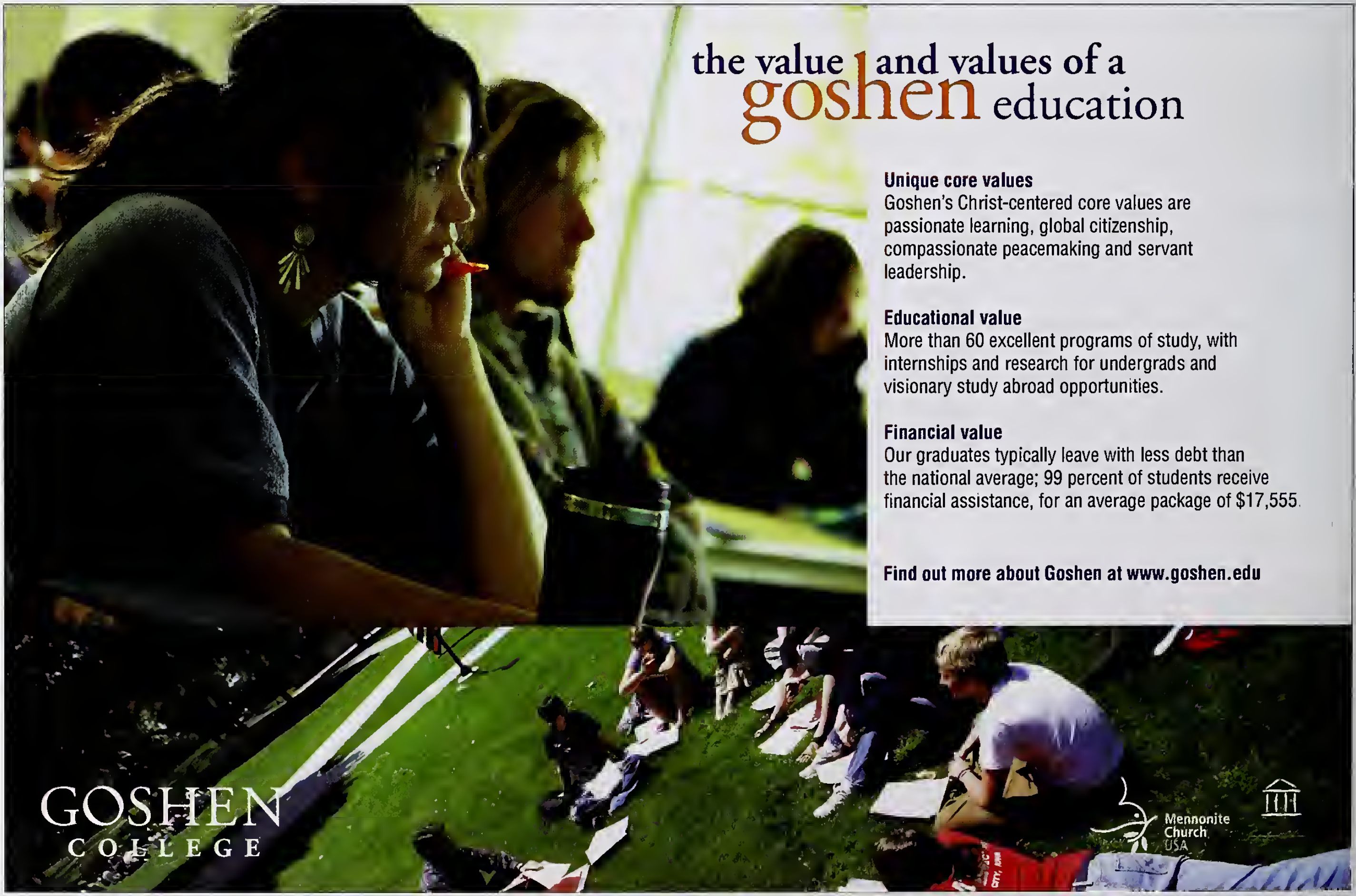
Kuhns/Shenk: Dennis R. Kuhns, Waynesboro, Va., and Edith N. Shenk, Harrisonburg, Va., Oct. 6, at their home in Waynesboro.

McNay/Voth: Anna McNay, Wichita, Kan., and Benjamin Voth, Newton, Kan., Nov. 17, at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

DEATHS

Bachman, Verne Edward, 80, Moundridge, Kan., died Nov. 24. Spouse: Aline Matilda Young Bachman. Parents: Adolph and Clara Ewy Bachman. Children: Debra Flavin, Judy Bachman; four grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 27 at West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge.

Franz, Walter, 67, Gretna, Manitoba, died Nov. 7. Spouse: Hilda Penner Franz. Parents: George and Tena Franz. Children: Laurie Enns, Chris, Tamara Franz-Martin, Len; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 12 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona, Manitoba.



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Friesen, Margaret Jean Blair, 79, Altona, Manitoba, died Nov. 14. Spouse: Jacob C. Friesen (deceased). Parents: William and Margaret Johnston Blair. Children: Sheldon, Sheryl Peters, Karen Friesen; 12 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 18 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Kauffman, James Arthur, 80, Kalispell, Mont., died Nov. 7. Spouse: Naomi Mast Kauffman. Spouse: Lenora Eash Kauffman (deceased). Parents: N.L. "Roy" and Anna Snyder Kauffman. Children: Elton, Jay, Willard, Ted, Jeremiah, Vernon Dachs, Jerry Dachs, Anita Stinde, Nettie Wagoner, Renee Sanford; 48 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 13 at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Kalispell.

Kroeker, Irvin, 63, Inman, Kan., died Oct. 19. Spouse: Shirley J. Thiessen Kroeker. Parents: Martin E. and Marie T. Doerksen Kroeker. Children: Stanley, Raymond, Wendell, Gail Monroe; four grandchildren; eight step-grandchildren; six step-great grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 24 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Inman.

Lapp, Erma Mae Hertzler Stoltzfus, 91, Lansdale, Pa., died Oct. 26 of acute myelogenous leukemia. Spouse: I. Wilbur Lapp (deceased). Spouse: E. Frank Stoltzfus (deceased). Parents: John M. and Lena Swartzentruber Hertzler. Children: William F. Stoltzfus, Donald L. Stoltzfus, Robert T. Stoltzfus, Nancy L. Falconer, Will T. Lapp; five grandchildren; four step-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 30 at Dock Woods Community Chapel, Lansdale.

Martin, Jason S., 80, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 3. Spouse: Mary Baer Fuss Martin. Parents: Joseph E. and Mary Shaum Martin. Children: Stephen, Philip, Michael, Judith; six grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 9 at Yellow Creek (Brick) Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Showalter, Mary Virginia, 92, Stuarts Draft, Va., died Nov. 17. Parents: Amos Henry and Lillie Harriet Suter Showalter. Funeral: Nov. 20 at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va.

Smoker, Arthur, 83, New Holland, Pa., died Nov. 19. Spouse: Muriel L. Lyndaker Fisher Smoker. Spouse: Esther Zimmerman Smoker. Parents: Joseph and Rachel Lapp Smoker. Children: June Horst, Jay C., Karen Martin, Joanne Zimmerman, Debra Miller, Blair Fisher, Darlene Robinson, Kurt Fisher; 10 grandchildren; four step-grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 24 at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Weber, Helen H., 96, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 20. Parents: Joseph H. and Esther K. Hunsberger Weber. Child: Eleanor W. Munzinger; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 26 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Wilson, Elizabeth Prosser, 84, Mount Jackson, Va., died Nov. 21. Spouse: Harold Wilson (deceased). Parents: Hubert Timothy and Edith Elizabeth Petree Prosser. Children: Kathleen Becker, Judith Bell, James; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 24 at Dellinger Funeral Home, Mount Jackson.

Yoder, Maurice A., 79, Topeka, Ind., died Nov. 30. Spouse: Doris Cummings Yoder. Parents: Quintin and Edith Yoder Yoder. Children: Cheryl Nelson, Kim Graves, Kelly Miller, Jerry, Gary; 15 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 5 at Emma Mennonite Church, Topeka, Ind.

Airing on many ABC-TV stations Jan. 6-Feb. 24, 2008
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(Airing at discretion of local stations. Encourage your local ABC station to air this program from the network's "Vision and Values" series. Contact us if you have questions.)

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Men's retreat at **Spruce Lake Retreat** Jan. 17-18, 2008, featuring speaker Mark Vincent and musician Steve Garrett, with a spiritual and personal challenge "for guys." Package $104.40. Pastors may attend for $50/person. Spruce Lake is a Mennonite retreat center in the Pocono Mts. Call 800-822-7505; www.sprucelake.org.

Central District Conference (CDC), a conference of Mennonite Church USA, is searching for a ***full-time conference minister***. The conference minister will provide spiritual leadership to CDC, its congregations and pastors; provide for supportive relationships for CDC pastors; communicate and articulate the vision of CDC; call, equip and support leaders to carry out the vision of CDC; facilitate communication with congregations and serve as a representative of CDC to other MC USA conferences and the denomination. For further information about CDC: www.centraldistrict.mennonite.net/. For further information about the conference minister position, contact Robert Ramseyer at ramseyer@wcoil.com. Applications received until Jan. 15, 2008.

'**Bicycle the San Juans**.' Give a gift that will take your favorite cyclist on a wonderful experience bicycling five days through beautiful scenery on the "paradise islets" of Washington and benefit MCC. Aug. 4-8, 2008. For registration information, contact Ken Beachy at 503-634-2604 or beachykn@monitorcoop.com.

Hebron Mennonite seeking pastor. **Hebron Mennonite Church**, located in Hagerstown, Md., is seeking a ***full-time pastor*** for our congregation of 75 people. HMC wants to grow spiritually, numerically and be involved in social justice/community outreach. We are located in scenic western Maryland, 60 miles from Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Church profile available at www.mennoniteusa.org. Contact Dave Zook, dvdzk@aol.com, phone 301-733-5871.

Participants wanted in developing tractors for the third world. www.boscomut.com.

A book called "**rafiki: Letters to Omar**" by Joseph C. Shenk (deceased) available at xlibris on their Web site, www.exlibris.com/rfiki.html. ISBN 1-4257-7171-8. Cost $20 plus shipping. A book of personal reflections on life in East Africa while mission was becoming national church.

Swamp Mennonite Church seeks a passionate ***full-time senior pastor*** to focus on preaching, pastoral care and equipping leaders. SMC is a Christ-centered, welcoming church (regular attendance of 140) that is a fellowship of believers committed to serving our community, living in peace and making Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and worship relevant in the Quakertown, Pa., area. Seminary training is required. Interested people should email the pastoral search committee at swampsec@fast.net.

Goshen College invites applications for two ***full-time, tenure-track faculty positions*** in the music department, to begin fall 2008:

Voice and choral conducting: Conduct Goshen College chorale and men's choir; assist with opera productions as needed; teach applied voice; teach courses in vocal pedagogy and class voice as needed; possible assistance with teaching courses in music education and supervision of student teachers.

Orchestra conducting and music education: Direct GC orchestra, wind/brass ensemble; direct the orchestra for GC opera productions; teach music education courses and supervise student teachers; assist with administering adjunct teachers in the instrumental area; teach other courses depending on the candidate's qualifications and departmental needs in a liberal arts setting. Terminal degree required for tenure. For more information and application instructions, visit the Goshen College Web site at www.goshen.edu/employment. Review of applications begins on Jan. 7, 2008, and will continue until the position is successfully filled. Minority people are especially encouraged to apply.

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Margie Figgins, Development Director
Scattergood Friends School (IA)

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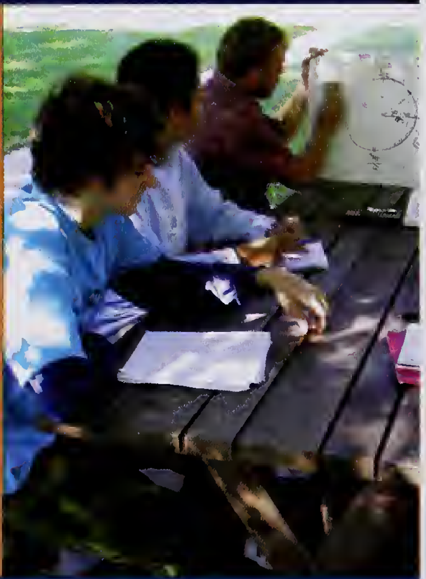

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*Rates effective Dec. 1, 2007, and are subject to change on a monthly basis. There will be a 1 percent premium on construction loans during the construction period.

Tabor College seeks ***full-time mathematics faculty*** starting August 2008. Doctorate preferred. Must have a passion for teaching, mentoring and advising undergraduate majors, affirm Tabor distinctives as an Anabaptist Evangelical Christian college and articulate personal Christian commitment. Complete position listings at http://www.tabor.edu. Send a letter of interest to lawrencer@tabor.edu.

Goshen College seeks ***full-time, tenure-track assistant or associate professor of biology*** with August 2008 start. Specialization in biology/molecular, biology/microbiology. Exceptional teaching skills, mentoring students, collaboration within and across disciplines and academic leadership experience needed. Develop undergraduate research program attractive to students with biomedical interests. Ph.D. required; college-level teaching experience preferred; interest in teaching in a small liberal arts college; strong interest in undergraduate research; support of the core values and mission of Goshen College. For application instructions, see position announcement at www.goshen.edu/employment Web site. Goshen College is an EEO/AA employer seeking a diverse faculty and staff.

Salem Mennonite Church, located near the growing community of Tofield, Alta. (45 minutes southeast of Edmonton), is seeking a ***lead pastor*** to minister to our congregation of 125 people. The successful candidate will have previous pastoral experience and/or a bachelor of theology degree or equivalent. Compensation will be commensurate with qualifications. Interested people should forward their resumés to: Carla Fendelet, secretary, Salem Mennonite Church, Box 56, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0; fax 780-662-0106; email cgfen@telus.net.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership seeks a ***full-time Web content manager*** to join its communications team. The Web content manager will play a key role in developing and enhancing Mennonite Church USA's Web presence as well as ensure that content on the denomination's Web site is consistent with Mennonite Church USA's priorities and overall communications strategy. This position provides a unique opportunity to impact and impart Mennonite Church USA's mission, goals and resources through technology and multimedia. The ideal candidate will possess strong interpersonal communication skills and work well within a team. She or he should be detail-oriented and possess a good understanding of communication theory and strategies. At least two years' experience in Web-oriented work is desired along with demonstrated writing and editing skills. Fluency in Spanish is highly desired. For a detailed job description or to submit a resumé, cover letter and work samples, contact Executive Leadership Human Resources at HR@MennoniteUSA.org or call 866-866-2872 and ask for Executive Leadership Human Resources. Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership is an equal opportunity employer and encourages women and racial/ethnic people to apply.

Goshen College seeks ***project director for center for intercultural teaching and learning*** to begin early 2008. Ph.D. or Ed.D. preferred, master's degree required along with at least three years administrative experience with higher education experience preferred. Expertise required in intercultural education, project management, development, research management and financial management. For application instructions, visit www.goshen.edu/employment. Goshen College is an AA/EEO employer committed to Christian values as interpreted by the Mennonite church.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. **Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.20 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available. To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Rebecca Helmuth, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.**

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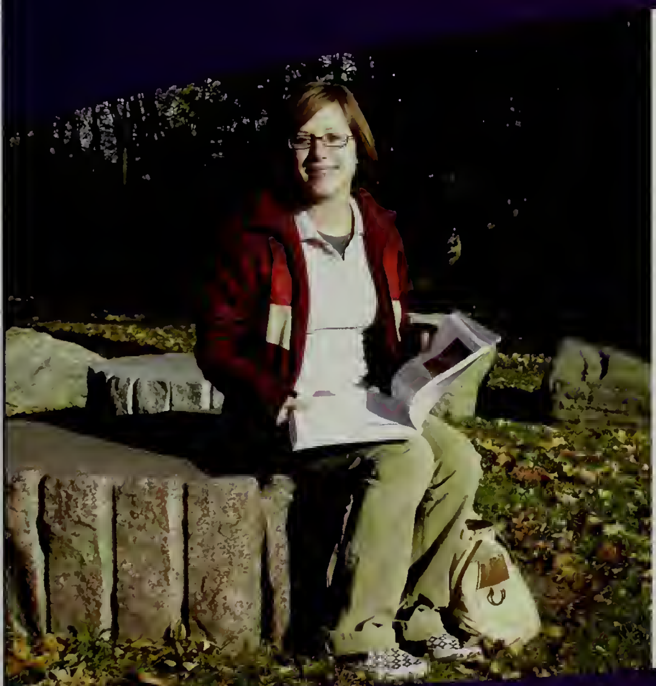

"Through Bluffton University's semester-long Northern Ireland program, I realized that 'peace' is really a verb; it's something we must seek and not simply sit back and observe. I can't explain how valuable it was for me to see conflict resolution in action daily and to realize that peace is more than a word—it's a process that takes much work and cooperation. That truth was made so clear to me in Northern Ireland, and I cherish my time there because of it."

– Carrie Yoder, senior,
Millersburg, Ohio

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Making the church more offensive

Gordon Houser

Suppose you had the revolution you are talking and dreaming about. Suppose your side had won, and you had the kind of society that you wanted. How would you live, you personally, in that society? Start living that way now.—Paul Goodman

Should the church be a little more offensive—or at least a little freer from the surrounding society's habits and institutions? Perhaps it has something to learn from a movement going on in our culture.

When Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15), and Peter answered, "The Messiah," Jesus blessed him and added: "You are Peter ['Petros' in Greek], and on this rock ['petra'] I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it" (16:18).

We tend to think of the church as a fortress, a defense against the attacks of Hades. But here Jesus envisions the church doing the attacking, being on the offensive.

By "offensive" I don't mean being rude or impolite or disrespectful. I mean acting on what God calls us to do rather than always reacting. I mean being bold rather than timid.

We might learn something from a movement taking place around the world sometimes called DIY (do it yourself). In various places, people are taking initiative in trying to bring about more just and healthy communities.

Yes! magazine (Winter 2008) includes some stories of such initiatives. A neighborhood in Christiania, Denmark, for example, has declared itself a "free zone," open to all, car-free and governed by its inhabitants.

In southern Mexico, people have developed alternative ways of learning, emphasizing apprenticeships that foster traditional skills.

Conversation Cafés have sprung up in urban settings, encouraging intimate, reflective and respectful conversations. The guidelines for group settings are these:

Open-mindedness: Listen to and respect all points of view.

Acceptance: Suspend judgment as best you can.

Curiosity: Seek to understand rather than persuade.

Discovery: Question assumptions, look for new insights.

Sincerity: Speak what has personal meaning.

Brevity: Go for honesty and depth but don't go on and on.

Imagine Christians practicing such guidelines more consistently.

In Miami, homeless citizens didn't wait for the city government to solve their problem but formed Umoja Village—"Unity" in the East African language of Kiswahili. On Oct. 23, 2006, homeless residents and organizers erected a shantytown on public land. A drug- and alcohol-free zone from the beginning, Umoja offered a safe space to put down roots and work for a communal cause.

You can think of many other examples, including farmers markets and community playschools. And, you may add, the church has been doing such things for centuries, from the desert monks in the fourth century to the Franciscans in the 13th to the Anabaptists in the 16th.

Yet as churches grow, the temptation to institutionalize is strong, And such control can stifle initiative. The missional emphasis of Mennonite Church USA can perhaps free congregations and individuals to listen to the Spirit's voice and act in ways that may be new and different, ways that may run counter to society's habits.

We can learn from entrepreneurs, who have that willingness to take risks and fail in order to find something that serves people's needs.

Kenneth Thompson writes on page 2: "Let's not be content to say what [Jesus] did but do as he said." That may require the courage to take action when no one else is instead of waiting for the government or some other institution to do it.

Perhaps we can adapt DIY to make the church more offensive in bringing wholeness to our world and opposing the powers of Hades.

The reviews below are available as podcasts at www.TheMennonite.org

BOOKS

As we enter a new year, we welcome aids to our devotional practices. Here are a few of many: **Take Our Moments and Our Days: An Anabaptist Prayer Book** (Herald Press, 2007, $22.90) is a four-week cycle of morning and evening prayer services for the period in the church year between Pentecost and Advent. **Praying With Beads: Daily Prayers for the Christian Year** by Nan Lewis Doerr and Virginia Stem Owens (Eerdmans, 2007, $12) shows how using beads can enrich our prayer life. **Now It Springs Up: Spiritual Insights for Every Day** by Carol Duerksen, Michele Hershberger and Laurie Oswald Robinson (WillowSpring Downs, 2007, $17.95) includes reflections on Scripture, many of them geared to children and families, for every day of the year. Written by three Mennonite women, the devotions include three elements: Plunging into the Word, Pondering on the Way, and Praying and Walking in the World. It provides good spiritual nourishment.

DVDS

Ghosts of Abu Ghraib (NR) examines the abuses at the notorious Iraqi prison in the fall of 2003. The film interviews U.S. military personnel who committed the heinous acts as well as victims and witnesses. It shows how orders from above led directly to these atrocities. The film shows, as have others, that U.S. officials, including Rumsfeld and Cheney, lied. Officials blamed the soldiers and exonerated themselves. In 2006, President Bush signed the Military Commissions Act, which further eroded the rights of prisoners guaranteed by the Geneva Convention. This well-documented exposé is difficult to watch but necessary.

Those of us who bring you The Mennonite wish you God's richest blessings during this season of hope and light.

Left to right: Anna Marie Groff (assistant editor), Celina Romero (bookkeeper), Gordon Houser (associate editor), Rebecca Helmuth (circulation and advertising coordinator), Everett Thomas (editor), Dee Birkey (designer). Not pictured: Nora Miller (proofreader) and Martha Graber (who reads *The Mennonite* on audio cassettes).

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Everett J. Thomas

More peace this Christmas?

Are the wars, rumors of wars and atrocities of the past decade abating? Will Christmas 2007 be a peaceful season? Will we begin a new year with renewed hope?

Peace is not the absence of conflict, but its absence is better than its presence. This year there is less conflict in North Korea and Iraq. Even Darfur and the Sudan seem quieter, although Khartoum must accept the new, 26,000-strong U.N. peacekeeping force if we are to see any real change in that tortured region.

Elsewhere there is hope in the Middle East: Israel and its Arab neighbors accepted an invitation by President Bush last month to sit down and talk. And it seems no one worries any longer about the former combatants in Northern Ireland.

Wars are conflagrations that ignite after years—maybe decades—of people piling on the dry brush of nationalism, ethnic pride and economic greed. That is why so many people—including Mennonite Central Committee—are trying to soak the pile of dry brush being accumulated by the U.S. government in its propaganda attacks against Iran. In early December, the White House said it had new intelligence that Iran is not building nuclear weapons. Hopefully, this information will further dampen the pile of tinder waiting to be lit.

A longtime peace activist uses an analogy about war and peace that I find helpful. When people ask him what he would have done about Hitler, he responds with this parable: A person who smoked two packs of cigarettes each day complained after 20 years that there was no cure for the cancer he contracted. In other words, World War II and conflicts like the one in Iraq cannot be disconnected from a history of causes.

Peace is the fruit of respectful relationships and dialogue, and genuine peace is breaking out in some places. Religions that in the past anathematized each other are now finding ways to talk to each other. For example, Muslim leaders sent a letter to Christian leaders entitled "A Common Word Between Us and You" (see box). Here are excerpts from the original letter:

"Muslims and Christians together make up well over half the world's population. Without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world. The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians.

"The basis for this peace and understanding already exists. It is part of the very foundational principles of both faiths: love of the One God and love of the neighbor."

Animosity between Muslims and Christians is a cancer that contributes to war in Iraq, despair in Darfur and the still-possible conflict with Iran. But when religious leaders actively resist the temptations of religious and cultural pride, the factors that create war are diminished.

This year, as we again celebrate God's coming to us as an infant in a manger, we do so with the blessing of at least one other major world religion. This year, when we hear, "Peace on earth, goodwill to all," it may be closer to what God intended than what we have known during many recent Christmas seasons.—*ejt*

This year, when we hear, "Peace on earth, goodwill to all," it may be closer to what God intended than what we have known during other Christmas seasons.

This article is available as a podcast at www.TheMennonite.org

ONLINE

From Islam, with love

Last September, more than 130 Muslim leaders came together for the first time to declare a "common ground" between Christianity and Islam. Those who signed the resulting letter came from every denomination and school of thought within Islam, and every Islamic country and region sent representatives to sign the letter addressed to all Christians everywhere. The entire letter is available at www.acommonword.com. Here is an excerpt from that Web site:

"Never before have Muslims delivered this kind of definitive consensus statement on Christianity. Rather than engage in polemic, the signatories have adopted the traditional and mainstream Islamic position of respecting the Christian Scripture and calling Christians to be more, not less, faithful to it."

Mennonite Church USA was included in the Christian groups to whom the letter was sent. Representing Mennonite Church USA, executive director James Schrag sent a response (see Readers Say, Nov. 20).

"We thank those who have issued 'A Common Word,'" Schrag wrote, "and assure you that we will continue to pray and work for Christian-Muslim understanding, cooperation and peacemaking."—*ejt*

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